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FORTY YEARS
OF DIPLOMACY

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By BARON ROSEN

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THE day had dawned at last—the great day that was to mark the entry of Russia into a new phase of her historic development; the day that was to see the realization of the noblest dreams of the flower of Russia's aristocracy, who, in December, 1825, had laid down their lives and sacrificed their liberty in the cause of the freedom of the people and of what they thought would assure the welfare and greatness of their country. Whether friend or foe of the constitutional reform, no thinking being could be unmoved by the momentous import of the event which was, for good or for evil, to decide the fate of the nation.

Detained by my official duties at Washington, I could only follow from afar with profound emotion the events of those historic days as they were reported in the Press.

It appears from all accounts that April 27, old style (May 10), 1906, was one of those radiantly beautiful spring days that in northern latitudes sometimes mark the awakening of nature to a new life after a prolonged winter's sleep.

As reported in the Press, the opening of the first Russian Parliament went off without a hitch. The management of the impressive ceremony in the Winter Palace, where the Emperor delivered his Speech from the Throne, was perfect. The Emperor and Empress had arrived from Peterhof, where they were in residence for the summer, on board their yacht, which anchored in the river in front of the Winter Palace. Their Majesties landed at once and proceeded to their apartments in the Palace, where they awaited the announcement that the Council of the Empire and the Lower House of Parliament were assembled in the Throne

Room. Preceded by the bearers of the insignia of Empire, the Banner, the Sword of State, the Globe, the Sceptre and the Crown, the Emperor, between the Empress Mother and the reigning Empress, followed by the Grand Dukes and Grand Duchesses, and a numerous and gorgeous Court, moved solemnly through the endless suite of magnificent halls and salons to St. George's Hall. Received by the clergy, the Emperor kissed the Holy Cross and listened to the *Te Deum* sung by the Court choir. The religious ceremony over, His Majesty, who bore himself with great dignity, walked slowly to the raised dais and seated himself on the throne. Having taken from the hands of an attendant the paper containing the text of his speech, the Emperor rose and delivered his address to the representatives of the nation in a firm voice, which was heard distinctly in every corner of the hall, emphasizing every word. The admirable and even cordial tone of the Sovereign in renewing his pledges and asking the co-operation of Parliament for the regeneration of the country, failed, however, to evoke from the Lower House any response whatever. The enthusiastic cheering which broke out after the Emperor had finished speaking was confined to the members of the Council of the Empire, the Court and the representatives of the higher bureaucracy, the Duma members remaining ominously silent.

One of the Press cablegrams mentioned Count Witte, "who—a pathetic figure—before the ceremony was seen pacing the corridor entirely alone. Later he entered the Throne Room. Clad in the gold and black uniform of a Secretary of State, one of the highest dignities of the Court which still remained to him, and with the broad ribbon of the Alexander Nevsky Order across his breast, he took his place in the ranks of the old bureaucracy. Ex-Minister of the Interior Durnovo was there too, chatting with his companions, but Witte seemed to find a cold welcome from everyone. Finally he wandered away and stood apart until the Imperial procession approached."

Such was, if this report is to be believed, the attitude of the Court and the bureaucracy, at this historical moment, toward the great statesman and patriot who had secured for the country the momentous reform which alone, if followed up in the spirit intended by its originator, could

have averted the catastrophe, the approach of which could be felt by anyone whose senses were not dulled by inveterate prejudice and purblind obstinacy.

Mr. Iswolsky, who arrived from Copenhagen just in time to witness the ceremony as a dignitary of the Court—his appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs not yet having been gazetted—records his impressions as follows :

The Emperor's speech was listened to in the deepest silence ; it produced visibly a good impression on the deputies. In previous utterances of the Emperor, as well as in public acts recently promulgated by the Government, every allusion to a "constitution" or to any limitation of the rights of the Sovereign had been carefully avoided ; it might have been apprehended lest the Emperor might seize this opportunity to proclaim once more the autocratic character of his power ; the members of the Duma were, therefore, agreeably surprised when they listened to this passage of the Emperor's speech :

"As for me, I will unalterably maintain the institutions I have granted, for I am firmly convinced that you will with all your forces devotedly serve the fatherland in order to satisfy the needs of the peasantry so dear to my heart, of the enlightenment of the people and of the development of its prosperity, mindful that for its veritable prosperity a State needs not only liberty, but also order founded on the principles of the Constitution."

The discreet warning implied in the last words, particularly emphasized by the Emperor, did not prevent the deputies appreciating the fact that for the first time they had heard from the lips of the Sovereign the word "Constitution." In spite, however, of the good impression produced by the Speech from the Throne, it was not greeted by any acclamation by the members of the Duma.

It would, I think, interest the reader to learn of the impression produced on the mind of a judiciously observant, impartial and not unfriendly foreign witness of the same spectacle. This is what Mr. George von L. Meyer, American Ambassador to Russia,¹ has to say on the subject in his diary, under date of May 10, 1906 :

The entire left side of the hall was occupied by the members of the Duma, and they were peasants, shopkeepers, priests, merchants, lawyers, even a dentist and a Catholic bishop. Perhaps a third were in dress-suits, half a dozen in uniform, and many in simple peasant costume and rough clothes. All this made a strange contrast with the officers in their silver or gold-lace uniforms, members of the

¹ I quote here and elsewhere from Mr. Meyer's *Biography*, by M. A. de Wolfe Howe.

Council and members of the Court. On one side were the representatives of the people and on the other those of the bureaucracy past and present. Those on the right had shown themselves unequal to the task of satisfactorily governing the nation. Would the left be equal to the occasion? Judging simply from appearances, it was not encouraging. . . . In watching the deputies I was surprised to note that many of them did not even return the bows of His Majesty, some giving an awkward nod, others staring him boldly in the face, showing no enthusiasm, and even sullen indifference. As he rose again from the throne there was an absolute stillness. He then proceeded in a firm voice to read his address. When he finished there was a tremendous outburst of applause, but limited almost entirely to the right side of the hall, the deputies remaining quiet. As he descended from the throne the applause and shouting on the right continued and increased, but the marked silence on the left was ever noticeable. The Emperor carried himself with dignity under the trying ordeal, and should receive credit for what he said in his address to the members of the Duma. Judging merely from appearances, it was difficult to recognize any marked ability or distinguishing trait among the members of the Duma which would specially fit them for the great task that is before them; but the contrast between those on the left and those on the right was the greatest that one could possibly imagine, one being a real representation of different classes of this great Empire and the others of what the autocracy and bureaucracy have been.

In a private letter to President Roosevelt on the same subject the Ambassador summarizes his impressions in the following weighty words :

Russia is entering upon a great experiment, ill prepared and uneducated. . . . I cannot help but take a pessimistic view as to the future, when I see evidences everywhere of a communistic spirit among the workers and peasants. . . . From the above I do not mean to imply that a crash is coming at once, but that sooner or later a struggle . . . between the Crown and the Duma, unless all signs fail, is more than probable. To-day the Government is in possession of funds and the Army, but within three years the entire Army will have been recruited and with the new ideas and doctrines that are permeating the minds of the people, who can tell if the Government can then rely upon the troops to obey the officers and quell disturbances.

Nothing could have been more judicious than the view taken of the situation by this level-headed and clear-sighted statesman. On the other hand, nothing could have been more injudicious, recklessly injudicious one might say, than the attitude taken up by the Constitutional Democratic (or so-called "Cadet") Party, under the leadership of

Professor Miliukoff. That party, although its leader, for some formal reason, could not be elected a member, wielded a commanding influence in the Duma, mainly owing to the fact that, besides being the only really well-organized party, it numbered in its membership the strongest intellectual forces of the country. From the very first sittings of the Duma this party took a stand violently hostile to the Government. On its initiative an address to the Sovereign, in response to the Speech from the Throne, was unanimously voted by the Duma, wherein entirely inadmissible demands were put forward, inadmissible inasmuch as they amounted to a demand for a fundamental revision of the constitution granted by the Sovereign on the basis of his October manifesto. They included the abolition of the Council of the Empire—that is to say, the Upper House of Parliament, a Ministry responsible to the Duma; forcible expropriation and distribution among the peasants of the lands of estate owners, and so forth; and, lastly, absolute amnesty for all political crimes and offences. Some of the leading orators of the Cadet Party indulged in violent attacks on the Government on account of the severity of the measures adopted for the repression of the revolutionary movement, and clamoured for the immediate liberation of all prisoners held on account of participation in revolutionary activities. One of the few members of the moderate Liberal Party, the so-called "Octobrist" Party, offered an amendment severely condemning the countless and incessant murders of officials of every grade in the service from governors down to policemen, but this amendment was voted down by the Cadet Party and their Radical allies. In short, the Duma began from the start to assume the part of something like a Constituent Assembly, an attitude that was bound to lead to a rupture with the Government. The Emperor declined to receive the delegation which was to have presented the address, and the Duma was directed to forward its address to the Minister of the Household, through whom it was to be submitted to His Majesty. The friction caused thereby had somehow been smoothed over, when the Government, or rather the Prime Minister, Goremykin, against the advice of the only two really able members of the Cabinet, Stolypin and Iswolsky, undertook to reply to the address by a declaration couched

in haughty terms explaining the inadmissibility of the Duma's demands, with the result that after a heated debate a vote of censure on the Government was passed by a crushing majority, coupled with a demand for the resignation of the Ministry. But the great and final stumbling-block proved to be the agrarian question. The Labour group, a small group of extreme Radicals, or rather camouflaged Socialists, who passed as representatives of Labour, brought in a Bill to expropriate all land and allow only small holdings on the basis of personal labour. The Cadet Party, instead of frankly opposing this wild scheme, based their own Bill on hardly dissimilar principles, including forcible expropriation of the lands of estate owners, although not entirely without compensation, and one of their orators, a Mr. Hertzenstein, who subsequently was murdered by agents of "The Black Hundred," in one of his fiery diatribes alluded to the numberless cases of burnings of country mansions as "illuminations" and a proper warning to the country gentry. A large land committee was constituted and the Duma proposed to organize its own local committees to collect materials, in other words to carry on an agrarian agitation on a large scale all over the country. The Government responded by publishing an official communication openly combating the propositions introduced in the Duma. Thereupon the Duma by a majority vote adopted an address to the people in reply to the Government communication, following it up by a new demand for the dismissal of the Ministry.

The long-expected crisis had come. On the morning of the 8/21 of July an Imperial manifesto was published dissolving the Duma, appointing new elections and summoning a new Duma for March 5th of the following year. At the same time Goremykin resigned and Stolypin was appointed Prime Minister, retaining his post as Minister of the Interior.

Thus the first attempt at parliamentary institutions ended in failure, furnishing fresh arms to the reactionary enemies of constitutional reforms, from the introduction of which they predicted nothing but disaster to the country.

I cannot help referring again to the views which Ambassador Meyer knew how to express with such lucidity. This is what he wrote in his diary on July 18th, three days before the dissolution of the Duma :

It looks to-day as though the Cadets and the Crown were drifting farther apart again and that the present Cabinet would be compelled to stay in. This would be unfortunate from my point of view. I believe the Tsar would do well to take a Cabinet from the Constitutional Democratic (Cadet) Party, put them in power, and make them responsible. It is the only way to *make them conservative*, and for the Crown to get support in the Duma while they *are still loyal* and in a majority. The Austrian Ambassador, who has been quite pessimistic, to-day felt more encouraged. He looks at it from a different point of view. Does not believe in recognizing the Constitutional Democrats, thinks the Duma should be dissolved and have the struggle now, which he believes would be short-lived, as the majority of the *troops are now loyal*. This, as I think, would not solve the problem before the country, and would mean a greater and worse strife later on.

Two months later on, on September 2nd, Ambassador Meyer, in a private letter addressed to President Roosevelt from Kissingen, writes :

If the Socialist or Anarchist can once disabuse the minds of these eighty million peasants of the idea that the Tsar is their Little Father, and that they can expect no further assistance from him, but must look to the people for redress, then events which have so far transpired would appear legitimate in comparison to what would probably take place throughout the land. One must live in Russia to understand it. It is impossible to draw any conclusions from experiences and results in other countries. Every step or attempt that has been carried on in a revolutionary way has been made without reference to what has gone on before or what is to follow. They do not know what they want, except that *they want everything at once—what has taken other nations generations to acquire*. Professor Vinogradoff said the other day :

“The Russian nation will realize, as other nations have done before, that a living organism cannot transform bones and sinews at pleasure, that the future has deeper roots in the past than the present is inclined to grant. . . .”

The Tsar does not seem to realize that in the long run the will of the people will eventually assert itself. Everything that he grants is done either too late or when it is self-evident that it is forced from him. Unless he changes his course and adopts a policy satisfactory to the nation it is merely a *question of how long the Army remains loyal*.

It will be observed from these extracts that not only Mr. Meyer, but also the Austrian Ambassador, Baron Aehrenthal—that is to say, the two ablest Ambassadors at the time in St. Petersburg—were taking a very pessimistic view of the situation in Russia and were both laying special stress on

the question of *how long the Army would remain loyal*. This is a most important question, to which I shall have to revert later on. As to the divergence of opinion between these two diplomats in regard to the advisability of putting in power the Cadet Party, Mr. Meyer would perhaps have modified his opinion if he had seen the leaders of that party at work when the March Revolution, which they had themselves inspired, literally thrust power upon them and their Octobrist allies. As a matter of fact, however, the idea of a Ministry composed exclusively of members of the Cadet Party had been taken up by General Trepoff, the Prefect of the Palace, a staunch adherent of the autocratic regime and in high favour at Court, possibly in the hope that a Cadet Ministry would, by the intransigent attitude it was sure to adopt, very soon provoke an open breach with the Sovereign, which might lead to the establishment of a temporary military dictatorship and perhaps the repeal of the Constitution. This plan was defeated by Stolypin, who had just been appointed Prime Minister. Although his endeavours to form a Coalition Ministry with representatives of the Octobrist and Cadet Parties had failed for the same reason which caused the failure of Witte's attempt in the same direction, Stolypin was nevertheless firmly resolved to uphold the Constitution at any cost.

"Russia is entering upon a great experiment, ill prepared and uneducated," said Ambassador Meyer, in his letter to President Roosevelt. The truth of this remark, expressing a most judicious and clear-sighted appreciation of existing conditions, cannot be questioned. It relates to both sides, to the Government no less than to the Duma.

Inexperience and unpreparedness for the practice of representative institutions, as well as non-comprehension of the mentality of the peasantry, showed itself on the part of the Government before even the opening of the Duma in the quite unreasonable extension of the suffrage far beyond the limits established in England by the Reform Bill of 1832, in the expectation that by filling as many seats as possible with peasant deputies the Government would secure a solid block of Conservative supporters.

This singular illusion, in which even so perspicacious a statesman as Count Witte seems to have shared, was very

generally entertained, and not only by the bureaucracy. As a matter of fact, the solid mass of two hundred peasant deputies in a House of five hundred members, solely interested in the division among them of the lands of the estate owners, was ready to give its support to any party that would promise satisfaction of these demands. And that was evidently the reason which caused the Cadet Party to adopt as one of the planks of its platform not only the distribution among the peasantry of the lands belonging to the State, the Imperial family (the so-called appanages) and the convents, but also the forcible expropriation for the benefit of the peasants of the lands of large and medium estate owners. In this connection I would observe that it is not, as will be shown farther on, the insufficiency of land in possession of the peasants that is the cause of their poverty and distress and that the division among them of the lands of the estate owners, if equitably operated, could not by any means remove that cause by appreciably increasing their holdings. In support of this latter contention I quote from memory some statistical data, which, I believe, will be found substantially correct.

Of all the land in European Russia 43 per cent. is held by the peasantry, 36 per cent. is owned by the State, 12 per cent. belongs to the estate owners, and 9 per cent. to corporations, to the appanages of the Imperial family, to towns, convents and churches.

In their relations to the Duma the Government from the very beginning displayed its utter inexperience in parliamentary practice, which, of course, could not be wondered at, not to mention Goremykin's haughty attitude in reading his declaration and the very tone of that document. The Government had neglected to prepare some important Bills to be at once submitted to the Duma. The first, and for some time the only, Bill introduced was a demand for the appropriation of a paltry sum for the installation of a bathing establishment. I think it was in one of the provincial Universities. This extraordinary attempt at starting the legislative machinery was perhaps due to the playful initiative of some bureaucratic underling, thoughtlessly endorsed by his responsible chief, but it must have produced the effect of an intentional slight to the Duma, and it presumably caused not a

little irritation. The consequence was that, the legislative apparatus having once been started without anything important to work on, the Duma took the initiative in its own hands and the different parties introduced each its own wild scheme for the settlement of the agrarian question.

Meanwhile the rostrum of the Duma was being zealously utilized as a tribune from which to launch forth to the world the most violent diatribes against the Government, whose members were but seldom found in their seats, preferring to be represented by some assistant functionaries. Allowance must, of course, be made for the novelty of the situation offering for the first time in the life of the nation an opportunity for blowing off long pent-up steam. But if one stops to consider the absurd inadmissibility of the Duma's demands put forward in their address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, one cannot help agreeing with what Ambassador Meyer wrote in one of his letters to President Roosevelt: "They do not know what they want, except that they want everything at once—what has taken other nations generations to acquire." And yet one should be loath to blame them for it. What more natural, what more laudable indeed, than that the leaders of Liberal opinion should have deeply felt the condition of inferiority to which cultural and political backwardness condemns the Russian people, and that they should have been burning with an ardent desire to raise their people to the level of more advanced nations!

Is it not excusable that lack of political experience which they never had any chance of acquiring should have prevented their realizing that their noble aim could never be reached by any short cut, but by slow and gradual evolution, the path trodden by other nations in the course of centuries! Were they not, besides, egged on by the powerful stimulus of enthusiastic approbation in foreign countries, where ignorance of Russian conditions apparently caused people to believe that all that Russia needed was the overthrow of "Tsarism" and autocracy in order to be turned at once into a constitutional monarchy like England or a democratic republic like France! The harm done on these lines by well-meaning friends has certainly been an element in shaping the destinies of our unfortunate country.

The climax of absurdity was reached when, immediately after the dissolution of the Duma—an act unquestionably within the rights of the Sovereign by virtue of the Constitution—the members of the Cadet Party, with the President of the Duma, Professor Muromtseff, at their head, repaired to Wyborg, a town in Finland at a few hours' distance from St. Petersburg, outside the limits of the jurisdiction of Russian courts and police, and there held a meeting which, after prolonged and heated debates, ended in the adoption of a resolution in the shape of an appeal to the people to refuse military service and the payment of taxes. This appeal was embodied in a document which was signed by all the deputies present and became known as the "Wyborg Manifesto." As an illustration of the simple-mindedness with which this act of, to say the least, questionable loyalty had been performed by the participants in the meeting, a story was told me later by a young American, who, being an excellent Russian scholar and personal friend of some of the Duma members, had been admitted to the meeting. Returning to town he found himself in the train alone in a compartment with a member of the Duma who seemed to be greatly elated by what had passed at the meeting and what he evidently considered to have been an act of great civic courage. When, however, he asked my American friend what he thought of it and had been told that the act of inviting the people to refuse military service and the payment of taxes seemed perilously near an act of high treason, he changed colour, and, visibly perturbed, said that it had never occurred to him to look upon it in that light.

Dense ignorance of constitutional life and politics and of the play of parliamentary institutions was by no means confined to new-born legislators and the general public; it was fully shared by the highest circles of the bureaucracy. A curious incident illustrating this condition is mentioned in his "Reminiscences" by Mr. Iswolsky, himself the only Russian statesman of the period, not even excluding Stolypin, who was thoroughly familiar with the working of parliamentary institutions in Western Europe. This incident occurred in connection with the visit to England of a deputation of the Duma invited to take part in the Inter-Parliamentary Conference in London. In receiving this delegation on the

very day when the news had come of the dissolution of the Duma, the British Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, greeted them with the exclamation, "The Duma is dead, long live the Duma!"—winged words which were flashed all over the world and produced quite a commotion in St. Petersburg. Mr. Iswolsky avers that he had not a little difficulty in persuading his colleagues, and even the Emperor himself, that Campbell-Bannerman had certainly not meant any offence and had simply been paraphrasing the traditional formula used in France in announcing the demise of the Crown. "*Le roi est mort, vive le roi*," meant to accentuate the idea of the continuity of the monarchical principle.

A year later I had occasion to convince myself by personal experience to what extent unripe political ideas were prevalent with us even in circles where one would least expect it. It happened in this way: One morning at the Embassy at Washington a card was brought to me bearing a name which I recognized as belonging to one of the oldest families of our gentry, Mr. S——, Member of the Council of the Empire, with a line drawn through these words. When Mr. S—— was shown into my room I noticed that, in spite of the early hour, he was dressed as for some solemn official occasion, and he approached me with the diffident air of a person not quite sure of the kind of reception he is to meet with, explaining in the most ceremonious way that he had ventured to intrude only because he deemed it his duty as a loyal subject to pay his respects to the representative of his Sovereign, and so forth. Guessing at once that I had to deal with someone who was prejudiced against me as a possible political adversary, I therefore shook hands with him in the most cordial manner, made him sit by my side and laughingly said:

"Will you permit me in reply to your ceremonious speech to ask you an unceremonious question? Are you not a 'Cadet,' and did you not suspect that I was one of the dreadful reactionaries one had better avoid touching even with a pair of tongs?"

That made him laugh in his turn and confess that I had been about right in my guess. Once the ice was broken, we fell into a friendly chat, in the course of which I asked

him why he had ceased to be a member of the Upper House, as his card seemed to indicate. He then explained that when the first Duma had been dissolved he had immediately sent in his resignation because he considered the dissolution to have been a breach of the Constitution, against which he held it his duty to protest in the only way open to him.

In reply to this I felt compelled to enter a vigorous protest against this mode of manifesting his disapproval of the dissolution of the Duma. To begin with, the right to dissolve the legislative assemblies being one of the prerogatives of the Crown in all constitutional monarchies, the Government's action in this case was taken in unquestionable conformity with constitutional law and practice. It could, therefore, be found fault with solely upon the ground of questionable timeliness or opportunity under existing political circumstances. But then, however great and even justified might have been the dissatisfaction of the Opposition in either House with the Government's policy in dissolving the Duma, how in the world could the voluntary laying down of his legislative functions as an elected member of the Upper House serve any useful purpose whatever in the struggle for the supremacy of Parliament in which the party to which he professed allegiance was engaged!

In trying to analyse the motives of my visitor's action in resigning his seat in the Upper House, one is in the presence of a mental attitude which, although in this case purely individual, yet displayed by a man of independent means, unassailable social position, highly cultivated mind, and in every respect representative of the uppermost layer of our "Intelligentzia," might well be taken as a fair illustration of that trait of the national character which finds expression in Tolstoy's doctrine of non-resistance to evil, in meek renunciation and in weak-kneed readiness to throw up the sponge at the first encounter with a serious obstacle—a trait which goes a long way towards explaining some of the most astounding features of subsequent tragic developments in the nation's history.

In the course of conversation it developed furthermore that Mr. S—— was an enthusiastic adherent of the Cadet Party's agrarian programme, including the forcible expropriation of the lands of estate owners, he himself being

an owner of very large ancestral acres. He was likewise a believer in the doctrine that all land should belong to those who till it themselves, a doctrine which he had put into practice by distributing all his land among his peasants, retaining merely a couple of hundred acres, surrounding his mansion, as a park. Now, such a proceeding on the part of an individual owner, if subjected to close analysis, is either an act of generosity partly at the expense of his heirs and successors, or else, if undertaken for reasons of public policy, a most unwise confession of waning faith in the inviolability of property in land and therefore an indirect admission of its doubtful righteousness, most welcome and encouraging to the Socialist parties and their propaganda.

Of course, similar proceedings, of which there were not a few, were the outcome of the noble, although dreamy, idealism which, in conjunction with that characteristic freedom of spirit, generous unselfishness and fellow-feeling for suffering, contributed so much to create the indefinable but potent charm of Russian life as it was, to which most foreigners who had tasted of it bore willing witness. And to think that an immortal artist should in his younger days have drawn such an irresistibly fascinating pen-picture of that same Russian life which in his later years, by his anarchic teachings, he has done so much to destroy!

But it must never be forgotten that dreamily altruistic notions regarding basic principles on which civilization has hitherto been founded, and consequent weakening of the resistance to the insidious assaults to which they are nowadays subject, present an ever more threatening danger. A society which is no longer unshaken in its faith in the inviolability of its rights is on the eve of being shorn of the rights which it has no longer spirit enough to defend and therefore does not deserve to retain.

As strongly contrasting with the rather cloudy nature of certain ideas on the fundamentals of economic doctrine which one would occasionally meet with among our intellectuals, I cannot help recalling an apparently very insignificant circumstance I had occasion to observe in England some thirty years ago. I had arrived with my family at Shanklin, in the Isle of Wight, intending to spend there the summer and autumn, and I was house-hunting, when one

day on my way to the land agent I noticed on the enclosure of a vacant plot of ground a signboard advertising the lot for rent on a nine hundred and ninety-nine years' lease. Having transacted my business, it occurred to me to ask the land agent whether the mention of nine hundred and ninety-nine years as the duration of the lease was not merely an advertising device to attract attention. Whereupon he explained that that was by no means the case; that of course such a lease amounted practically to an outright sale, but that there was nevertheless what one might call a "string" to it; in proof of which he told me that in the preceding week a similar lease of some land in the vicinity of Shanklin, concluded in the reign of King Alfred, had fallen due, and that the land had actually reverted to a lineal descendant of the original owner of the property!

I mention this incident because it illustrates so convincingly the robust and, by the experience of centuries, justified faith of the English people in the inviolability of the right of property and in the stability of the social fabric of their country, a faith the lack of which has been one of the determining factors in causing another great Empire to collapse like a house of cards at the first assault of a small group of demented fanatics and murderous bandits.

But to cut short painful reflections such as these, which naturally haunt my waking hours and keep me awake at night, and to take up again the thread of my narrative. The new Prime Minister, Stolypin, showed great good sense in not attaching any tragic importance to the so-called Wyborg Manifesto, which had fallen flat and had failed to elicit any response whatever from the people, and in declining to gratify the ambition of its authors and signatories by awarding them the crown of martyrdom. He confined himself to having legal proceedings instituted against them under some law rendering their offence punishable as a simple misdemeanour. They, or most of them, were in the end sentenced to short terms of imprisonment, which they underwent under the easiest possible conditions as privileged "politicals." None of them were any the worse for the experience and some of them seemed even to take a certain "civic" pride in having undergone imprisonment for their political convictions. Some of the leaders of the Cadet

Party, such as Miliukoff and Rodicheff, had not been among the culprits, as they had been at the time attending the Inter-Parliamentary Conference in London, and therefore escaped responsibility for their party's vagaries in connection with the dissolution of the Duma.

From his very first days as Prime Minister, Stolypin had to face a very perilous situation brought about by mutinies in the Army and the Navy, which were evidently widely contaminated by Socialistic propaganda in their ranks. The military authorities, however, succeeded in mastering the movement among the troops without having recourse to extreme measures. Iswolsky, relates an experience he had in these perturbed times in connection with one of his weekly audiences with the Emperor for the presentation of his report as Minister of Foreign Affairs. I cannot resist the temptation to quote his most interesting account of it, as it sheds the light of truth on the real character of the unfortunate Sovereign who was destined to meet such an unspeakably horrible fate.

It happened that Mr. Iswolsky had an audience on the day when the mutiny among the sailors and garrison at Kronstadt was at its height and a regular battle was being fought between the loyal troops and the mutineers. The audience took place at the Imperial family's favourite summer residence, in a small villa in the park of Peterhof, standing on the very shore of the Gulf of Finland opposite Kronstadt and its many forts, distant about eight or nine miles. The Minister was seated, facing the Emperor, at a small table placed in a bay window overlooking the sea. While he was making his report continuous discharges of heavy ordnance, constantly growing in intensity, were distinctly audible. It was the fate of the Empire's capital, perhaps the security of the Sovereign himself and his family that were at stake, depending on the issue of the battle. But the Emperor listened to the report of his Minister with perfect composure, taking the keenest interest in every detail and never showing the slightest sign of emotion. Struck by the Emperor's attitude, himself labouring under the strongest emotion, he ventured to ask what it was that enabled him to preserve such wonderful composure. The Emperor gave him one of those deeply earnest, kindly

looks which always impressed those who came in close contact with him, and said :

“ If you find me so little troubled, it is because I have the firm and absolute faith that the destiny of Russia, my own fate and that of my family are in the hands of Almighty God, who has placed me where I am. Whatever may happen, I shall bow to His will, conscious that I have never had any other thought but that of serving the country He has entrusted to me.”

He must be callous indeed who, in the light of the fate that has overtaken the martyred Sovereign, husband and father, could read these noble words without being stirred to the depths of his soul by feelings of infinite pity and commiseration.

During the session of the first Duma the Socialist Revolutionaries had suspended the interminable series of their dastardly assassinations of Government functionaries of all classes, down to the humblest ranks of the police force, who were heroically dying in the simple performance of their sworn duty. It seems that they even had had the unblushing audacity to publish in the foreign Press a declaration to the effect that

In the presence of the functioning of the Duma and until the political situation should have become clear to the people they were discontinuing their terrorist tactics without, however, ceasing to prepare for the combat ; the Central Committee of the party would decide at what moment the revolutionary tactics would have to recommence.¹

That such an infamous declaration by a revolutionary party in a friendly State should have been published, as was said to have been the case, by respectable newspapers abroad, unaccompanied by scathing comments on its criminal and revolting character, shows on how little real sympathy Russia could count anywhere in the world, and how great was the general ignorance of Russian conditions ; for it must be remembered—and that, I hope, after the experiences of our revolution, can no longer be subject to doubt—that our revolutionary parties, whatever their designations,

¹ Mr. Iswolsky's “ *Reminiscences*,” in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of July 1, 1919.

whether Bolsheviks or Menshevists, Socialist Revolutionaries or Social Democrats, under the false pretence of a struggle for liberty and constitutional government, never really aimed at anything but the destruction of the political and social fabric of the country for the purpose of erecting on its ruins the Utopian edifice of their dreams.

One of the most fatal consequences of our political backwardness has been that public opinion in more advanced countries has been accustomed to look upon any revolutionary activity working for the overthrow of the Russian Government as a rather meritorious undertaking worthy of the sympathy of all liberal-minded men, without stopping to consider whether the existing form of government which had created one of the greatest Empires in the world, enjoying perfect financial credit, well deserved by scrupulous fulfilment of all financial obligations, in spite even of being at war with a creditor nation, as was the case during the Crimean War when our Government never failed to meet the payment of interest due on its loans placed in England (by the way, a curious contrast with practices adopted by the foremost civilized nations in the recently concluded World War) which was securing law and order and perfect safety of life and property in every part of the immense Empire, and which had placed the country on the high road to prosperity and the fullest development of its almost boundless natural resources—I repeat, without stopping to consider whether such a form of government was not, after all, the best suited to the Russian people in their actual state of cultural and political development; nay, whether it was not indeed the only possible one under existing circumstances; and last, but not least, without stopping to consider what the ultimate aims of the Russian revolutionists really were and whether these aims were not subversive of the very foundations on which their own social structure is built.

Incidentally I would draw attention to the fact that the same liberal and radical opinion which never had enough condemnation for the legitimate Government of Russia is now seemingly adopting a rather lenient attitude toward the most tyrannical Government the world has ever seen, maintained by a small band of usurping adventurers with a ruthless cruelty which puts the most sanguinary

misdeeds of a Nero or an Ivan the Terrible entirely in the shade.

It could hardly be denied that the moral support which our revolutionists were finding in radical, and to some extent even in liberal public opinion abroad, was bound to encourage them in their nefarious warfare against the Government of their own country. This warfare had its beginning at the time of the great reforms of Alexander II, whose attempted assassination on April 4, 1866, was, so to speak, the first gun fired in a contest which has continued ever since in a vicious circle; revolutionary attempts provoking repression, repression provoking redoubled revolutionary activity, and so on until the final victory of the revolution, with the catastrophal result which the world is witnessing at present.

The Socialist Revolutionaries were as good as their word. The dissolution of the Duma was followed by an almost uninterrupted series of terroristic crimes which lasted several months. The necessarily stern measures resorted to in the repression of these outrages were made the subject of the usual reproaches directed against Stolypin as the head of the Government by those who hold that the right to the use of the dagger, the pistol and the bomb is the privilege of the terrorists fighting for an "idea," but that it is the duty of Governments to defend themselves solely with means of persuasion, because, foresooth, ideas may not be combated with force of arms—except, however, the idea of law and order.

The most abominable of these terroristic crimes was committed in the month of August following the dissolution of the Duma. A formidable explosion, produced by an extremely powerful bomb thrown in the vestibule of the villa which served as the Prime Minister's summer residence, totally wrecked the building, which was a wooden one, destroying about one-third of it. Among the sixty victims of the explosion were some forty visitors awaiting audiences in the Minister's reception-room. About one-half of them were killed outright, the rest were more or less severely wounded. Two of his children were found under the débris of the destroyed part of the building—his daughter very seriously wounded, his little son less so; Stolypin, who

had been in his study adjoining the reception-room when the explosion occurred, escaping unhurt.

It seems that the three criminals who had brought and thrown the bomb in the antechamber, shouting "Long live the Revolution!" had been blown to pieces themselves, so that their identity could not be established.

Mr. Iswolsky relates in his "Reminiscences" that the Prime Minister, having immediately moved with his family into his official town residence, called the same evening a meeting of the Cabinet. He opened the proceedings declaring that the attempt on his life, in which two of his children had become the victims, would not in any way whatever modify his programme, which was: pitiless repression of any disorder and of any revolutionary or terroristic act; realization with the co-operation of the new Duma of a large programme of reforms in a liberal sense; immediate solution by way of Imperial decrees (in accordance with Article 87, of the Constitution) of the most pressing problems, and first of all of the agrarian question. He furthermore expressed the apprehension lest the reactionary party might seize this opportunity for attempts to induce the Emperor to institute a military dictatorship, or even to abolish the Constitution, and to re-establish the autocratic regime. He wound up by declaring that he was determined to oppose with all his might any such return to the past and would resign rather than swerve from his constitutional programme.

This was the man whose noble character, iron will, undaunted courage, and unswerving loyalty, had he lived, might have saved the country.

But he was destined to fall a victim, five years later, to a dastardly attempt by the hand of a vile assassin, the vilest of the vile, a double traitor, a revolutionist and at the same time an agent of the secret police.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Stolypin and the agrarian question—Revolutionary movements—Discontent of the peasantry—Communal ownership—The second Duma—Russian expansion — Poland — Finland — The Baltic Provinces — Diplomatic achievements.

UNDETERRED by terroristic threats and the abominable crime to which so many visitors in his house had fallen victims, Stolypin went to work without delay at the important tasks he had set himself. Among them the most important and urgent was the difficult task of finding a satisfactory solution of the agrarian question.

Before proceeding any further with this subject, I must request my American readers to keep in mind that conditions as they existed from the beginning in their favoured land, where such a class as a peasantry in the European sense has never existed and where the first settlers and their successors, even to within recent times, found awaiting them an almost illimitable expanse of unoccupied virgin soil; in short, that these conditions are so fundamentally different as to be totally unfit to serve as a point of comparison with the agrarian problem in Russia.

These difficulties are the outgrowth of historical developments dating back many centuries. They are not to be lightly brushed aside. The temptation is apparently great to attribute them mainly to a reluctance to sacrifice the vested interests of estate owners to appeasing the land hunger of the peasantry, and to seek the solution of the problem in a simple proposition somewhat like this: The gradual impoverishment of the peasantry is a fact; its cause is the insufficiency of their land holdings; the estate owners are in possession of vast tracts of land which should belong to the actual tillers of the soil; the expropriation of these lands and their distribution among the peasantry would remove the cause of the latter's impoverishment.

It is easy to see how such a proposition, seemingly logical, although based—as will be shown later—on erroneous premises, could enlist the approval of even friendly outside observers, ignorant of the real condition of things in Russia, not to mention its general attractiveness from the point of view of those who look upon individual property and the property-owning classes as obstacles to the advancement of mankind. The high-priests of that new faith are now having their innings and are demonstrating to a still half-incredulous world to what abject state of chaos, ruin and desolation a once great and prosperous country could be reduced by the abolition of individual property and the spoliation, scattering and to some extent even bodily extirpation of the property-owning classes.

I must further request the indulgent reader to give me credit for being free from the influence of personal interest or class feeling in endeavouring to shed the light of what I conceive to be the truth on the agrarian question in Russia, in regard to which much misapprehension prevails abroad and which has been greatly obscured by partisanship on behalf of both the interested sides as well as of believers in the respective merits of rival economic and sociological doctrines.

In support of my claim to independence of judgment and personal disinterestedness in this matter, I beg leave to explain that it is now just over a century since the last landed estate belonging to my branch of the family, of which I am the last male descendant, was engulfed in the ruin consequent upon Napoleon's invasion in 1812, and that therefore I am in no way personally interested in any aspect of the agrarian question in the past, nor can I expect any personal benefit from its ultimate solution.

Stolypin undoubtedly realized the urgent necessity of finding such a solution of the problem as would give a fair promise of cutting the ground from under the feet of the revolutionary agitation, inasmuch as it was playing not only on the greed, but also on the real distress of the peasantry caused by its undeniable gradual impoverishment.

In judging of the importance and the urgency of such a solution being found, it is necessary not to lose sight of the historical development of the revolutionary movement in Russia from its very inception in the years following

the Napoleonic Wars to within recent times. In the first quarter of the last century Russia was still an almost exclusively agricultural country, and the nation consisted mainly of the illiterate and totally inarticulate mass of the peasantry, held in the bondage of serfdom, and on top an infinitesimally thin layer of the highest grade culture, represented by the aristocracy, heading the more numerous and still fairly cultivated landed gentry, owners of medium-sized and small estates, from whose ranks were recruited the bureaucracy and the officers of the Army and Navy.

Of a middle class or "bourgeoisie" in the Western sense, there was none. The intermediate class between the gentry and the peasantry comprised the merchants, tradespeople and other city dwellers, who culturally were not far removed from the peasantry in which they had their roots.

Such was the rather primitive structure of Russian society in the beginning of the nineteenth century, and such were the conditions of Russian life of that epoch of which Tolstoy's genius has drawn such a fascinating picture in his celebrated novel *War and Peace*. They did not present a favourable soil for planting the seeds of revolution brought back from the Napoleonic Wars by the officers who had become imbued, during our occupation of parts of France, with the ideals of the French Revolution.

The revolutionary movement was confined to a narrow circle of higher officers of the guards and the Army and of the aristocratic youths of the capital. It culminated in December 1825 in an attempt at a military revolt in St. Petersburg. Its aim was the proclamation of a constitution on the occasion of the accession to the throne of Nicholas I, whose elder brother, the Grand Duke Constantine, had renounced his rights to the crown.

The attempted revolt was easily put down by loyal regiments of the guards who had remained faithful to their oath; and the hopelessness of the undertaking was best illustrated by the fact that when the mutinous troops were ordered by their officers to shout "Long live the Constitution!" they were said to have done so with great enthusiasm in the conviction that "Constitution" was the name of the Consort of the Grand Duke Constantine, in whose cause, as the legitimate Sovereign, they imagined they had revolted.

Five or six of the ringleaders paid with their lives for their devotion to their noble ideal of liberty and progress; the rest, whose list read like an extract from the almanac of the Russian nobility, were deported to the mines in Siberia, where most of them remained, respected even by their jailers, until pardoned by the Emperor Alexander II on his accession to the throne.

The nation lost the priceless services of some of the best and noblest of her sons, but on the surface of her stagnant life their heroic self-sacrifice caused hardly a ripple.

The long and reactionary reign of Nicholas I kept the lid firmly down on whatever elements of unrest the nation harboured, and it was not until the first half of Alexander II's reign that a revolutionary movement began to show signs of activity. But it originated in quite a different stratum of Russian society and was confined almost exclusively to the "Intelligentsia"—that is to say, the intellectual proletariat—to the causes of whose birth and growth I have already referred. It aimed, moreover, no longer at a political revolution, or rather it worked for such a revolution merely as a stepping-stone to the realization of its real aim—the destruction of the social fabric of the State and the erection of the Utopian edifice of socialistic dreams.

The coincidence of the reappearance of a revolutionary movement with the inauguration by the Government of far-reaching reforms may be explained by the same conditions that determined the attitude of the Socialist parties forty years later, when the grant of a limited constitution seemed to have given liberal opinion sufficient satisfaction to alienate entirely its sympathy from any attempt to overthrow the existing political regime, to the gradual and peaceful development of which along progressive lines all liberal-minded and truly patriotic elements of Russian society were justified in looking forward with confidence.

The writer of these pages was then a mere youth, but even now, in his declining years, in mourning the ruin and destruction of his country, he feels deeply moved in reviving the imperishable memories of those stirring times when, after a long period of reactionary stagnation culminating in the disastrous issue of the Crimean War, an enlightened Sovereign, with the ardent support of all the best in the land, broke

the chains of serfdom that held in bondage tens of millions of his people and inaugurated such far-reaching measures as the reform of the judiciary and the introduction of the self-governing institutions of the *Zemstvo*—measures profoundly affecting the life of the nation and creating an all-pervading atmosphere of hopefulness and joyous faith in the country's future. He had been a witness also of the stunning shock to the people's feelings caused by the sound of the first shot aimed at the hallowed person of the Sovereign, and of the outburst of patriotic rage which, had it not been restrained by the yet unquestioned power of the Government, would have found its vent in savage outrages against the "*Intelligentzia*," whom the people seemed to feel instinctively to be their true enemy and the enemy of the country.

This opening gun of the battle waged with blind fanaticism against the country's welfare by an infinitesimally small group of her deluded sons was followed by a series of dastardly attempts on the hunted Sovereign's life, until the final catastrophe, on the very day he had signed a manifesto opening the door to the ardently desired constitutional reforms.

It can never be sufficiently deplored that, instead of persisting in this progressive policy determined upon in the last days of Alexander II's reign, the new Sovereign was advised that salvation was to be found solely in a redoubled severity of repressive measures and a return to the reactionary policy of the second half of his predecessor's reign. But, on the other hand, it cannot be gainsaid that Alexander II's firm resolve to maintain intact the principle of autocracy responded fully to the feelings of the overwhelming majority of the nation, whose psychology, inclined to extremes, hesitates only between unquestioning submissiveness to a master and anarchy.

Nor can it be denied that the thirteen years of the reign of Alexander III, thanks solely to the unshakable firmness of his will, resulted in a complete restoration of confidence in the stability of the political and social fabric of the State, in a material prosperity such as the country had never known before, and in securing for Russia an international position unequalled in all her history.

Such was the splendid heritage left by Alexander III to his son and successor on the throne. What seemed to

be needed to keep it intact was an autocrat ; that is to say, precisely what Nicholas II was not.

With him as a steersman (wrote a very able and observant English journalist in a London weekly paper) the ship of State simply rolled about helpless in the trough of the sea—he himself being walloped from side to side of the vessel by the rudder, which he had strength enough to cling to but not to control.

Speaking of the unpreparedness of the Russian people for a “ full-blown ” constitution, the same writer says :

It is a great mistake to suppose, as is generally done in England and other countries, that the woes of Russia were due to the fact of her living under an autocratic form of government. For the God's truth is that this was, and is, the form of government best suited to her historical development and her present wants.

I take it for granted that the enlightened English writer here meant an autocratic form of government limited by a constitution, such as was granted by the manifesto of October 17/30, 1905, which, as I have endeavoured to show, responded to every real and reasonable need of the country in its actual state of political development and which Stolypin was determined to live up to by gradually introducing such liberal and progressive reforms as the country needed and was prepared to assimilate.

Stolypin's task, as he understood it, was that of a statesman and a patriot. In his earnest endeavour to accomplish it he had to contend on the one hand against influential reactionary elements—at Court and in the country—whose loyalty and patriotism was unquestioned but whose lack of political experience rendered them incapable of appreciating the wisdom of Stolypin's policy, and on the other hand against what was a mere handful, but a dangerous handful, of fanatical visionaries whose arms are the pistol and the bomb and whose unpardonable intellectual crime consisted in their entertaining the delusion that they were called upon to impose at any cost their fantastic schemes on their country.

Their criminal folly could only be equalled by the childlike faith of those estimable, simple-minded doctrinaires who believed that all that was needed was the overthrow of the autocracy in order to secure to the nation at once—of course under their guidance—the supreme benefit of an orderly,

democratic and civilized Government on Western lines. Alas, we have seen them at work, and the history of the last three years is there to demonstrate the results of their short-lived activity during the few months that the Revolution left the reins of power in their incompetent hands!

As far as the Socialist Revolutionary Party concentrated its activity on terroristic crimes, it could be, and indeed was, dealt with successfully by the police and the courts (courts-martial in localities which had been placed under an exceptional regime akin to a limited state of siege). But the revolutionary agitation carried on among the peasantry, with ever more telling effect, was of a far more dangerous character. It had led to "Jacqueries," murders, burnings of country mansions, of which more than two thousand went up in flames, all over the country. So long as the bulk of the Army still remained loyal the disorders could be, and, as a matter of fact, were in the end successfully suppressed.

As Stolypin has been made the target of embittered attacks both at home and abroad, I consider it to be due to his memory to quote the judgment of a distinguished English writer, who can hardly be suspected of undue partiality for Russia or for her leading statesmen of those days. This is what Mr. E. H. Wilcox, sometime correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph* at Petrograd, has to say on this subject in his interesting volume, *Russia's Ruin*:

We have seen since then what both the Jacqueries and the Soviet movement of 1905-6 would have led to if they had been allowed freely to run their course; and doubtless many of Stolypin's bitterest enemies in Russia have to-day revised their estimates of his policy, if not of the methods by which it was carried out. Stolypin was certainly a man of character, courage and energy, but he was denounced by the great mass of his fellow-countrymen as a ruthless reactionary and, in the end, paid for his policy with his life. . . . The first two Dumas were assemblies of excited and impracticable visionaries, without political experience, and imbued with the idea that all the complex wrongs of the old Russia could be put right in a moment by clothing pious intentions in statutory forms. Left to themselves, they would probably have reduced the Empire to chaos in six months. The chief effect of their intemperate debates was to encourage disorder. Anarchy established its reign in many parts of the country, and if the bulk of the troops had not stood firm to the Government, Russia would have experienced in 1905-6 what was her unhappy destiny in 1917-18. There were only two alternatives: either to

let disintegration take its course, in the vague hope that something positive would somehow be born of it, or to check it with a strong hand. Stolypin chose the latter alternative.

No Russian patriot could add anything to this sober and deliberate judgment, and it will not fail, I think, to be endorsed by impartial history.

But repressive measures alone, however energetically and even ruthlessly applied, could not conjure the most serious danger arising from the chronic discontent of the peasantry, insidiously and skilfully fomented by the revolutionary parties. With a statesman's insight, Stolypin, realizing that popular discontent can only be effectually combated by removing its cause, had made up his mind that agrarian reforms of a sweeping nature had to be taken in hand without the least delay.

The reason of the discontent of the peasant class, inasmuch as they were actual tillers of the soil, was a twofold one: their gradual impoverishment and their unappeased land-hunger.

In determining the true cause of the undeniable impoverishment of the peasantry in most parts of the Empire, Stolypin was aided by his experience as a large landowner who had for years personally superintended the exploitation of his properties and been in constant contact with his peasant neighbours, whereby he had gained a true insight into their real needs and grievances, as well as into the way they could be supplied or removed. On the other hand, however, he found himself in conflict with the pet doctrines of Slavophilism, in whose fervent cult he had grown up, like most young men of his generation.

The abolition of serfdom in Russia was achieved upon a plan differing in one essential respect from the way the same reform had been introduced in Western Europe, and also in the so-called Baltic Provinces under Russian sway, where the serfs had been liberated in the beginning of the last century.

Contrary to what had been the case in all these countries, in Russia the liberated serfs were endowed with lands expropriated from the estates of their former masters, the latter receiving more or less adequate compensation in the shape of interest-bearing "redemption bonds" issued by the

Government, subject to gradual amortization by means of a special "redemption tax" imposed on the peasantry. From the political point of view the wisdom of this measure may well be questioned, because it established in principle the right of the serfs to the ownership of some part of the land they had been tilling in the service of their former masters—a dangerous principle to admit, inasmuch as it sanctioned the idea of a right without at the same time establishing its limitation, thereby leaving the door open to future indefinite and limitless claims of the peasantry to more land, or even to all the land of the estate owners.

From an economic point of view this measure might have met with a certain degree of success in securing to the peasants economic independence from their former masters and in substantially improving their material well-being, a result that was actually obtained by a similar measure introduced some years later in the Kingdom of Poland after the suppression of the insurrection of 1863—not, however, without a political aim, that of encouraging the loyalty of the Polish peasantry at the expense of the land-owning gentry, whose loyalty was regarded as doubtful.

But as regards Russia proper, the economic aims which the Government must undoubtedly have had in view in introducing their agrarian reform were defeated by the very principle on the basis of which its realization was worked out; and here the always considerable influence of Slavophilism, which at the time seems to have had particular hold on people's minds, made itself felt with disastrous effect.

One of the principal tenets of the Slavophile doctrine, as I have already mentioned, consisted in looking upon the rural commune, the "Mir," as a profoundly original creation, and upon communal property as the essential basis of the social and economic organization of the country. It was evidently mainly the influence of this doctrine that the Government determined to base the agrarian reform not on the principle of individual ownership of land, but on that of communal ownership by the Mir.

Thus it was that a system of land tenure peculiar to the remote ages of civilization, came to be legalized and praised as an outflow of the particular genius of the Russian people

and a saving revelation to the rotten Occident steeped in materialism and bourgeois narrow-mindedness.

The proximate effect of the agrarian reform introduced by the Government was to place the peasants in a condition of bondage to the village commune or Mir, in some respects more onerous and more galling than their recent condition of servitude. Its disastrous economic effects, however, although not immediately noticeable, were bound to make themselves felt in the course of time with constantly growing intensity. They were due mainly to two causes inherent in the system of communal land holding.

First, the collective responsibility of the commune for all taxes. The effect of this system, evidently devised for fiscal reasons to simplify and ensure a more regular collection of taxes, was to discourage all efforts to increase the productivity of individual parcels of land allotted by the commune since the pecuniary results of such efforts would merely go to make up the deficiency caused by the lesser productivity of parcels in the hands of less efficient members of the commune.

Second, the periodical new subdivision of the land and redistribution of individual shares of members of the commune necessitated by the fact that the holdings allotted to the communes at the time of the emancipation of the serfs was a fixed quantity, whereas the natural growth of the population was continuous. This meant that at every successive subdivision of the soil the individual holder was allotted a smaller quantity. Besides the necessity of equalizing individual shares of equal area in regard to the varying qualities of the soil, led to the subdivision of each share into a number of strips of land situated frequently at considerable distances from each other. Thus, for example, Mr. E. H. Wilcox, in his *Russia's Ruin*, relates that

in one of the districts of the Yaroslav Government the average individual holding was in thirty-six different strips of land, which in 12 per cent. of the communes were only three and a half feet in width. In conditions such as these, it was necessary for all the members of the Mir to do their sowing and harvesting simultaneously. There were, moreover, cases where some of the land to be thus jointly cultivated was situated twelve miles or more from the peasants' cottages!

Under similar conditions cultivation of the soil, even on

the primitive three-field system still prevailing in Russia, was bound to become more and more difficult, to the total exclusion of any possibility of introducing intensive culture, from which alone an increase of productivity could be expected. It was plain, therefore, that the system of communal ownership of land was mainly responsible for the gradually progressing impoverishment of the peasantry. It was no less evident that the land-hunger of the peasantry could not be appeased by expropriating the lands of the estate-owning gentry, for the simple reason that there was not a sufficient area of such lands in existence, which, if equitably distributed among all the peasantry, would have increased their individual holdings to any really appreciable extent.

Stolypin realized that the only way to remedy the evil would be to attack it at its source, and that its real source was none other than the system of communal ownership of land. It required not only true statesmanship but also unflinching moral courage to attack the institution of the Mir, hallowed in the eyes of the adherents of Slavophilism as a genuinely Slav institution and believed in by the bulk of liberal opinion as the only preservation from the danger of the rise and growth of an agricultural proletariat.

He did, however, not hesitate to declare himself firmly in favour of the system of individual small holdings as opposed to that of communal ownership of land, and made it the basis of the agrarian reform which he took in hand with his wonted energy as soon as the first Duma had been dissolved, and enacted it in November 1906 as a law, subject to confirmation or rejection by the legislature on its re-assembling after the election of the new Duma.

The institution of the Mir, which had its root in the times of serfdom and still had a certain hold on the minds of the peasantry in many parts of the country, could not, of course, be abolished outright. But the main point of Stolypin's agrarian Reform Act was the recognition of the right of every village commune to dissolve itself, should it so desire, and of every member of a commune to withdraw from its membership, to claim his share of the communal holdings as his personal property, and to demand that his holding, instead of being as usual in several strips of land, should be united in one place.

Under the fostering care of the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Krivoshein, an energetic and upright statesman, whose administration of his department stands out as a model of efficiency, foresight and honesty, this law, designed to favour personal initiative and a higher standard of cultivation, proved a great and constantly growing success, denied only by blind partisans or by those to whom its success was unwelcome because, by creating a naturally conservative class of small landholders, it threatened to neutralize their endeavours to revolutionize the peasantry.

Provision was also made for the sale of lands belonging to the State and the "appanages," as well as for the purchase by the so-called Peasants' Bank of the many large estates thrown on the market by owners apprehensive of agrarian unrest and "Jacqueries," and for their resale to peasants in small plots, and, last but not least, for the emigration of the landless rural population to Siberia and Turkestan.

Now, as regards the question of the "land-hunger" of the peasantry, a difference should be made between "land-hunger" as a desire to take possession of all the land of their former masters, part of which had been allotted to them at the time of the emancipation, and the legitimate desire of acquiring new lands for the purpose of settling on them.

Inasmuch as such "land-hunger" is merely a form of covetousness of other people's property, it deserves no more sympathy than would any other claim of a similar nature, and the fact that it is an outflow of the traditional feeling and peculiar mentality of an ignorant peasantry could certainly not be considered a sufficient ground for its satisfaction at the cost of another class of property owners whose holdings happen to be larger.

Moreover, wholesale expropriation of the lands of estate owners would result in incalculable injury to the economic interests of the country, inasmuch as the bulk of our enormous grain export, on which our favourable trade balance depended, hitherto came from the lands of estate owners on account of their much greater productivity.

To talk of the necessity of the spoliation of the estate-owning class in order to appease the "land-hunger" of the peasant class when such land-hunger takes the form of a legitimate desire of acquiring new land for the purpose of

settling on it, would be obviously preposterous in a country which possesses in its gigantic Siberian Empire a land reserve sufficient for the accommodation of tens of millions of future settlers.

By his policy of encouraging and organizing on a large scale emigration to Siberia, Stolypin had unquestionably helped powerfully to appease this kind of legitimate land-hunger as well as to relieve the distress among the peasantry in European Russia, in whose favour, moreover, the payment of the oppressive "redemption tax" had been entirely remitted. He had at the same time created in what might be called the Russian Canada a class of small landholders whose solid and increasing prosperity was reflected in the phenomenal growth of the all-Russian co-operative movement, which had its origin in co-operative associations for the export of dairy produce founded among the Siberian peasantry.

There is little doubt that, had Stolypin lived and had not the war supervened, his great agrarian reform, which implied a complete reversal of the traditional policy of the Government, would have been carried out to the end, its aim would have been attained and the peasantry, converted into a class of small farmers, instead of being an easy prey to revolutionary propaganda, would have become, as conservative property owners, a solid and reliable support of the State.

Stolypin did not confine his activity to pushing his scheme of agrarian reform. He set to work elaborating various important measures, such as compulsory insurance of workmen, regulation of child labour, etc., tending to improve the condition of the labouring class, whose rapid growth had been fostered by Witte's policy of developing industry in Russia. In short, when the second Duma met in March 1907, there was ample material provided for the exercise of its legislative activity.

It turned out, however, that the second Duma, in spite of all attempts that had been made to manipulate the elections, was even more hostile to the Government than had been the first. Notably, the Socialist parties, who had boycotted the first Duma on the assumption that parliamentary methods might prejudice the cause of the Revolution,

had managed to win in the elections a large number of seats at the expense of the Liberal Centre parties and were enabled to exercise considerable influence. They had, of course, not come to the Duma to legislate but to prepare a revolution, their aim being a Constituent Assembly and eventually a Socialistic Republic.

Under these conditions co-operation with the Government was out of the question. A suitable pretext was soon found, and the Duma was dissolved in the middle of June. At the same time a new electoral law was promulgated considerably restricting the franchise so as to ensure for the coming elections a preponderance of the property-owning classes. This necessary correction of the original error committed in introducing a franchise bordering on universal suffrage, for which the nation was as little ripe as would have been the English people of the seventeenth century, was regarded as a *coup d'état* by the doctrinaires of constitutionalism and accordingly denounced with extreme violence. It attained, however, its object in rendering possible a harmonious collaboration between the Duma and the Government and in enabling Stolypin to steer a middle course between the demands of the reactionaries for a merely consultative Duma and the clamour of the doctrinaires for a Parliament with complete control of the executive.

His course, dictated not by lust of power, but by wise and far-seeing statesmanship, represented a compromise between autocracy and parliamentary government. Impartial history will, I feel convinced, recognize that his policy was not only best suited to the actual condition of the country and to the state of political development of the people, but also best calculated to create a preparatory school, so to speak, for the political education of the "*Intelligentsia*," as the future natural leaders of the nation, and their initiation into the practice of constitutional government.

But the carrying through of this policy required, besides enlightened statesmanship, a firm will and undaunted courage—qualities which none of Stolypin's successors seem to have possessed.

Whilst rendering full justice to the eminent quality and the noble and patriotic aims of Stolypin's statesmanship, it has always been impossible for me to agree with some of

his views, which were manifestly tainted with the narrow-minded nationalism of the Slavophile school. I refer to his conception of what the true interests of Russia required in regard to the treatment of her outlying dominions and her subject non-Russian nationalities.

Before approaching this subject it will be necessary to revert to a theme briefly touched upon in discussing our policy in the Far East—the question of the gradual expansion of the original nucleus of the Russian Empire in various directions, its causes, its justification and the policies adopted in its pursuit.

The expansion to the West was the work of the three greatest Sovereigns Russia ever had: Peter the Great, Catherine the Great and Alexander I. When Peter the Great had determined upon the thorough Europeanization of his country, Russia was an inland country with an only outlet to the Arctic Ocean by the White Sea, and he made up his mind that what Russia primarily needed was a “window”—as he liked to express himself—looking out on Europe.

His determination to secure such a window involved him in a protracted contest with Sweden under Charles XII, which resulted finally in the conquest of Esthonia and Livonia and in the possibility of establishing the centre of the Government at the mouth of the Neva River, where he founded the new capital of his Empire and christened it, not in honour of himself but of the Apostle Peter, St. Petersburg—a name since hallowed by many glorious memories of the past greatness of our country. The strange psychosis born of the World War caused it to be replaced by the more Slav and therefore presumably more patriotic-sounding designation of “Petrograd”—an example which the humbler and probably less emotional towns of Kronstadt, Peterhof and Oranjenbaum, as well as others in various parts of the country likewise afflicted with German or Dutch sounding names, declined to follow.

The next steps in the policy of expansion were taken by the Empress Catherine the Great. Her wars with Turkey secured for the Empire the possession of New Russia (Novorossiya) down to the Black Sea and of the Crimean Peninsula. Her participation in what her son and successor, the Emperor Paul, declared to have been a crime—the parti-

tion of Poland—enabled her to restore to Russia her Western Provinces, and the Eastern Provinces of Poland from Livonia down to Moldavia, which had been conquered from Russia by the Poles, but whose population, with the exception of the Polish land-owning gentry, was Russian, belonging to the so-called Little Russian and White Russian branches of the Russian nation, and in a small part Lithuanian.

Lastly, the Emperor Alexander I, as the result of a war with Turkey, annexed Bessarabia with the connivance of Napoleon, a short-lived alliance with whom likewise enabled him by a short campaign against Sweden to conquer Finland. By the final act of the Congress of Vienna after the Napoleonic Wars, Poland was divided between Austria, Prussia and Russia. Prussia retained Posen and Gnesen, Austria remained in possession of Galicia; Lithuania and the formerly annexed Eastern Provinces continued to be as "Western Provinces" incorporated in the Russian Empire, and the remnant was constituted as the so-called Congress-Kingdom united to Russia as a separate entity under the Emperor as King of Poland.

The Emperor Alexander granted to Poland a constitution, which remained in force until the Revolution of 1831. By virtue of this constitution Poland was to be governed by a Lieutenant of the Emperor, who must be a member of the Imperial House or a Pole. The first holder of the office was General Zajonczek, a veteran who had served under Napoleon, and he remained in office until his death in 1826 when he was succeeded as Lord-Lieutenant by the Emperor Nicholas I's elder brother, the Grand Duke Constantine who had renounced his right to the Russian throne consequent upon his marriage to a Polish lady, the Princess Lowicz. Poland also retained her flag and her national army based on that which had been raised by and had fought for Napoleon.

After the Revolution of 1831, and its reconquest by the Russian Army, the Congress-Kingdom was reduced to the condition of a Russian province, and a harsh regime of administration was inaugurated, which lasted until the accession of Alexander II, when Poland began to share in the new era of milder rule which began in Russia.

The Emperor had himself crowned in Warsaw as King

of Poland and addressed to his Polish subjects a flattering speech in French, as he could no more speak their language than his predecessors. He failed, however, to win their hearts, and his liberal policy, whilst perhaps it encouraged the Poles to revolt, produced a strong reaction against it in Russia, with the result that the suppression of the revolt was followed by a return to the sterner methods of government in use under Nicholas I after the Revolution of 1831.

If, now, we turn to the history of the conquest of Finland, we find that after the war of 1808 with Sweden under Gustave IV, by the peace concluded in the following year, Finland and the Aland Islands were ceded to Russia. Finland, however, was not treated by Alexander I as a conquered province, but thanks to his wisdom and generosity was allowed to retain her free constitution and fundamental laws, and become united to Russia as a semi-independent Grand Duchy under the Emperor as Grand Duke. The States were summoned to a diet at Borgo, and Alexander I, as Grand Duke, solemnly promised to preserve the religion, laws and liberties of the country.

Finland under the Emperors of Russia retained not only her own laws and administration, but also her own coinage and complete financial independence and tariff autonomy, so that at a distance of some twenty miles from St. Petersburg a customs frontier divided the Grand Duchy and the Empire. Under the shelter of the Russian Crown, Finland had become extremely prosperous, and when the Emperor Alexander II in 1863 convoked again the Diet, which had not met for fifty-six years, he was received with unbounded enthusiasm by the population. His beautiful statue erected in the square in front of the Cathedral and the Senate House in Helsingfors testifies to the regard in which his memory was held by his Finnish subjects.

A further proof of their loyal sentiments I came near witnessing myself when, in one of the first months of the Revolution, the Emperor's statue was defended by the Finnish population against the attempts of revolutionary Russian sailors and soldiers to overturn and destroy it. Unfortunately, Alexander III, who in the first years of his reign shared the great popularity of his father, fell under the influence of the reactionary party and the Slavophile

and Nationalist movement with its tendencies towards unification and Russification, which under Nicholas II in 1899 led to a virtual abrogation of the legislative powers of the Diet and to the introduction of an almost dictatorial regime under General Bobrikov.

Without attempting to follow in detail the seven-year struggle between the Russian bureaucracy and the defenders of the Constitution of Finland, I might mention here that politics in the Grand Duchy were complicated by the rivalry between the Swedish Party, representing mainly the property-owning classes of Swedish nationality, which had hitherto been dominant although comprising less than one-sixth of the population, and the Finnish "Nationalist" Party, which during the second half of the nineteenth century had been asserting its linguistic and political importance, wherein it was more or less favoured by the Russian bureaucracy.

The whole country, however, united in the most determined resistance to the attempted invasion of its constitutional rights, which culminated in a universal "National" strike coinciding with the revolutionary movement in Russia in November 1905. The result was the capitulation of the Government and the re-establishment of the *status quo* before 1899.

This restored order of things, however, was not destined to be a lasting one, as will be shown later on.

In his policy towards Poland and Finland the Emperor Alexander I displayed, as we have seen, not only a spirit of liberalism and generosity, but also statesmanlike judgment and far-seeing wisdom.

The same spirit was manifested in Peter the Great's treatment of Esthonia and Livonia, the two Baltic Provinces which he had conquered and incorporated in the Russian Empire as the final result of the victorious war against Sweden, under whose sway they had been since the sixteenth century. The native population of these two provinces, aggregating about two millions, consists, in the northern part of Ehots or Esthonians, a Finnish tribe belonging to the Ural-Altai or Mongolian division of the human race, and in the southern part of Letts, a people of Indo-European origin.

The landowning nobility and gentry, however, and almost the entire "bourgeoisie," were of German origin, descendants of the original settlers, who had invaded the country in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, had built the towns, taken possession of the lands, Christianized and reduced the natives to serfdom, which was abolished in 1827 under Alexander I. Although constituting but a small percentage of the population, the government of the country had for centuries been entirely in their hands. Peter the Great, realizing that the two provinces had reached a comparatively advanced state of culture, social organization and general prosperity, confirmed them in the possessions of all the institutions, rights and privileges they had been enjoying under the mild rule of the Kings of Sweden, appointed governors from the ranks of the local nobility and did not in any way interfere with their administration.

Peter the Great's policy in regard to these possessions of the Russian Empire, with the subsequent addition of Courland, effected under Catherine the Great, was continued by her and her successors until the advent, under Alexander III, of the era of forcible Russification, under the influence of the Slavophile and nationalistic tendencies of the Russian bureaucracy.

The time had come when the traditions of the wise policy of Peter the Great, Catherine the Great and Alexander I, the three greatest Sovereigns who ever sat on Russia's throne, and who had ruled the non-Russian dominions of the Empire without interfering with their institutions, language and religion in a successful endeavour to win their goodwill and loyalty, were to be forgotten and to give way to tendencies and practices in an opposite direction, with the result that the revolutionary movement of 1905-6 assumed particularly acute forms in these parts of the Empire, foreshadowing its coming disruption.

The elections under the new electoral law of June 1907, which had considerably restricted the franchise, took place in October 1907, and resulted in a victory for Stolypin's policy. In complexion the new Duma was a house of the upper class, with a predominance of country gentlemen who had served in the Army, in the upper branches of the local administration, or in the ranks of the bureaucracy in the

capital. There were a few merchants and a few prominent and extreme reactionaries. The moderate Right mostly voted with the so-called "Octobrists" (from the October Manifesto of 1905, of which they were convinced supporters), who, under the leadership of Gutchkoff, were the dominant party in the Duma and with the moderate Right formed a solid Government majority. Although Miliukoff had carried St. Petersburg, the Cadet Party ranked in numbers after the moderate Right. Fruitful co-operation between the Duma and the Government became possible and resulted in the passage of several important Acts, among them the confirmation of the temporary land laws of November 1906, the regular confirmation of the estimates, and so forth.

So far Stolypin had been working in perfect harmony with the ablest member of his Cabinet, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Iswolsky, who, himself a statesman of liberal views and imbued with Western ideas of constitutionalism, supported the Prime Minister most loyally in his endeavours to place the October constitution on a working basis. They separated only when, as Mr. Iswolsky relates in his "Reminiscences," he could no longer view without concern Stolypin's too frequent and too high-handed resort to emergency legislation under the famous Article 87 of the Organic Law.

During his short term of office as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Iswolsky undertook three diplomatic actions, the first two of which, much needed indeed and responding to real and most important interests of Russia, were crowned with a complete success redounding greatly to his credit, and the third—in my opinion entirely uncalled for, as will be explained in the next chapter—ended in a failure which may have embittered him to the point of obscuring his habitual clearness of vision when the course of events was plainly pointing to the catastrophe that was to bring about the downfall and ruin of our country.

The first concerned the conclusion of a friendly understanding with Japan which supplemented the Portsmouth Treaty in a manner entirely creditable to both sides.

The second ended in a friendly agreement with Great Britain which, although it dealt with Persia in the traditional imperialistic way of establishing zones of influence,

and so forth, had the great merit of putting an end to the era of rivalry and mutual distrust which for half a century had been poisoning the relations between the two great Empires.

The third action was undertaken apparently in the expectation of trading off our consent to Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for that Power's consent to our taking possession of the Straits, a proposition, which, as Iswolsky found out to his chagrin, was not even to be mooted to the British Cabinet, English public opinion not being yet considered ripe for such an issue running counter to all traditions of British policy. Our nationalistic Press, moreover, taunted him with having been willing to betray the sacred cause of Slavdom for a mere mess of pottage.

In the meantime the state of affairs in Finland had become disquieting. A revolutionary movement, in full sympathy with its Russian counterpart, had made much headway. The Diet elected under the new radical electoral laws, under the pressure of a large Socialist opposition, had shown itself quite unruly and openly hostile to the Russian bureaucracy. It was decided to resort to stringent measures to deal with unrest in Finland, and, on Stolypin's insistence, the Duma, in June 1907, passed a law for the better regulation of affairs common to the Empire and the the Grand Duchy—in effect a serious infringement of the guaranteed rights of Finland which the Finnish courts declared unconstitutional and consistently refused to apply.

Another proof of Stolypin's leaning towards a policy inspired by narrow-minded nationalism was the way he dealt with the question of the creation, in obedience to the clamour of the nationalistic Press, of a new "Gubernia" out of the district of Cholm, which had formed an integral part of Poland and which was to be separated from the Kingdom on the plea that the peasantry belonged to the Little Russian branch of the Russian family. A law to that effect was forced through the legislature and naturally gave great offence to Polish national feeling.

The relations between the Government and the Duma during Stolypin's Premiership were, on the whole, peaceful, although several conflicts arose over constitutional questions.

The most serious of these occurred in March 1911, when the Council of the Empire (the Upper House of the Russian Parliament) rejected a Government measure providing for the creation of "Zemstvos" (provisional assemblies) for the Western Provinces.

Stolypin prorogued the Council and the Duma for a few days and promulgated the Zemstvo Law under Article 87 of the fundamental laws, as an emergency measure. This arbitrary step raised a storm in both Houses. The Duma pronounced the action illegal and passed a vote of censure on the Government, while the President, Gutchkoff, resigned in protest.

In the following September Stolypin fell a victim to the assassin's bullet, in the Emperor's presence, at a gala performance in the Opera House at Kiew, and with him disappeared the last strong man who might have been able to arrest the country on the road to ruin.

CHAPTER XXIX

Assassination of Stolypin—Am appointed member of the Council of the Empire—The situation in Europe—Historical developments—Congress of Vienna—"Balance of Power"—Introduction of Conscription—The League of Nations—Nationalism—Italy—Poland—Prussia—The Balkans—Austria-Hungary.

THE fatal news of the assassination of Stolypin came to me by wireless when I was on board the *Adriatic* on my way to New York to bid good-bye to my friends there, for I had been informed that in the autumn I should be recalled from my post of Ambassador to the United States and be appointed a life member of the Council of the Empire—that is to say, of the Upper House of the Russian Parliament—under the Constitution of October 1905.

My appointment as member of the Council of the Empire having taken place in the late autumn of 1911, we made up our minds to settle down in Paris, the haven of refuge of most retired diplomats of all nations. This arrangement did not interfere with my attending to my parliamentary duties, for which purpose I used to go every winter to St. Petersburg, where I kept bachelor quarters at my club. Having taken my seat in the Council in December 1911, I naturally, during my first session, did not take any active part in the business of the House, and confined myself to studying, so to speak, the lay of the land.

It did not take me long to realize that, under the rules of the House, it would be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a chance of having my say on any question, not only of foreign affairs, but even of the general trend of the domestic policy of the Government. I determined, therefore, to refrain for the time being from any attempt in that direction and to devote myself to the study of the social and political conditions responsible for the general political situation in Europe, the disquieting nature

of which could not but be felt instinctively by even the least observant public in all European countries. No better point for the pursuit of such studies could be selected than Paris, where I had decided to spend most of my time in future, and I hastened to rejoin my family there as soon as the session of the Council was concluded in the late spring of 1912.

Those of my American readers who happened to be in Europe in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the World War must surely have been conscious, as I was myself, of the presence everywhere of a certain oppressive feeling, a vague premonition of portentous events. It was like the sultry atmosphere of a gathering thunderstorm, the distant rumblings of which, amidst flashes of lightning, were already reaching us from the far-away Balkans, that perennial storm centre of Europe. At the same time never was the social life in European capitals gayer and more brilliant; never was the contrast more glaring between the extravagant luxury and enchanted freedom of enjoyment of the few and the want and the narrow limitations of the many, condemned to a life of incessant toil, joyless monotony and anxious insecurity; never were conditions more favourable for a virulent outbreak of that old, chronic and incurable disease with which civilized mankind is, and probably always will remain, afflicted—the everlasting strife between those who “have” and those who “have not.” Incurable, because there is not, and there never will be, a sufficiency of the good things of this world to go round, and therefore their enjoyment will always be limited to a small minority, whereas the thirst for such enjoyment among the majority is constantly growing, as the spread of education and enlightenment among the popular masses renders them more and more impatient of the limitations imposed by their material dependence and social inferiority. But, apparently blind to the manifold symptoms of ever-growing social unrest and discontent, and deaf to the subterranean rumblings premonitory of impending cataclysms, the ruling Powers of the leading nations of Europe were pursuing their frenzied competition in ever-growing armaments, instead of devoting be it only a tenth part of their people’s treasure thus wasted for aims of destruction, to the better-

ing of the lot and the lightening of the burden of the toiling masses.

They seemed to be solely preoccupied with political combinations and calculations in view of the general European war, which all those in the know saw coming, and to which all their peoples undoubtedly were utterly opposed. The feeling was general everywhere that a European war, if it ever came, would mean a catastrophe of incalculable extent. The colossal size of the armies, rendered possible by the adoption by all the Great Powers of the Continent of the system of universal compulsory military service and the unceasing development of new and ever more perfected means of destruction on the one hand, and on the other the extremely delicate structure of credit, with its ramifications embracing the whole world, on the foundation of which the prosperity of the leading nations is built—these were conditions which were bound to lead to an unparalleled catastrophe if a general war was suffered to break out in Europe. How then was it possible that an event so generally and so justly dreaded could actually take place without any serious and really efficient attempt apparently having been made to prevent it?

This question can certainly not be answered off-hand by the simple assertion that the Great War was as unpreventable by human means as an earthquake, upon the ground that, as in the physical world, so also in the social world, although great changes come about by slow and imperceptible processes, catastrophic upheavals usually mark the advent of a new age. It stands to reason that, however great may have been the changes in the political, economic or moral conditions of the world which rendered the World War seemingly unavoidable, the fact of the actual outbreak of that war, as of any other war, must be, and can always be, traced back to the direct action of a certain number—and that a very limited one—of human beings. Before attempting to analyse the motives which, in the present case, may have determined the action of these human beings at the critical moment when the fate of nations depended on their decisions, it will be necessary to review briefly the historical developments which led up to the conditions confronting the modern world.

History shows that, ever since Europe emerged from the Middle Ages and became crystallized in a number of independent States, wars, with the exception of the Thirty Years' War, which was a religious war, and turned devastated Germany almost into a desert, were brought about by the personal or dynastic ambitions, the lust of conquest or domination of rulers, in all of which their peoples had no share. If no longer conducted in that spirit of sportsman-like chivalry which caused the French to salute their English adversaries with the cry, "*Tirez les premiers, Messieurs les Anglais,*" wars were carried on by comparatively small professional armies, whose operations were necessarily confined to correspondingly limited areas, and were in every sense wars between rulers and Governments, and not between peoples, therefore not engendering anything like the formidable volume of international and race hatred bred by the World War which bodes no good for the future of mankind.

Indeed, whilst waging war against some German Powers, Louis XIV had in his service a German regiment bearing the official style and title of "*Royal Allemand,*" and the Marshal of Saxe was one of the greatest leaders of his armies. Just as Hessian regiments, hired out by their ruler, were fighting the battles of King George III, whilst other Germans, like Steuben, were helping to organize the American forces.

Two things were not born as yet, two things destined to prove of the utmost importance in shaping the destinies of Europe, and both, strangely enough, connected with the name of Napoleon. I mean the "*nation in arms,*" or universal compulsory military service, and the "*question of nationalities.*" The birth of the first was due to the crushing defeat inflicted by Napoleon I on Prussia after the Battle of Jena, when a strict limitation of his military forces was imposed on the enemy by treaty and led to the systematic evasion of its stipulations by the conversion of the much reduced long-service Army of Prussia into a National Army, or a "*nation in arms*" on the basis of a universal short-term service as we knew it before the war. The credit of having been the first to raise the "*question*" of nationalities belongs to Napoleon III, who made it the guiding principle of his foreign policy.

A third circumstance characteristic of the epoch of so-called "dynastic wars" was that such wars could be terminated by the ruling Powers according to the dictates of reason and sound statesmanship, undeterred by popular passions and the hysterical clamour of yellow journalism. Thus the Emperor Alexander I, although his country had been invaded by the hordes of Napoleon and his allies, and his ancient capital laid in ashes, could, when at last he entered Paris as a triumphant victor, raise his authoritative voice in favour of defeated France and by his powerful opposition to the plans of some of his allies, prevent her dismemberment and humiliation, enabling her representative at the Congress of Vienna to play a part worthy of his country and his nation.

Also, that Congress was led by statesmen of the calibre of Alexander I, Talleyrand, Castlereagh and Metternich. If its much maligned work was based on an idea repugnant to contemporary opinion, that of a Holy Alliance for the defence of the monarchical principle against the assaults of the revolution, it must nevertheless be conceded that its other principal aim, that of the maintenance of peace, was attained, inasmuch as during forty years until 1854 there was no war between the Great Powers of Europe. The future will show whether it will be possible some day to claim as much for the League of Nations, from which are excluded three formerly great and prosperous Empires actually destroyed and reduced to a state not only of impotence, supposed to be desirable, but also of chaos, obviously dangerous to their neighbours.

The work of the Congress of Vienna, however, was no more perfect than any other work of men. It bore in itself the germs of its dissolution.

To begin with, the idea of the Holy Alliance, which corresponded to the mystical strain in the Emperor Alexander's mentality, inasmuch as it was meant to reaffirm and fortify the monarchical principle, in the sense of the absolute monarchy, or autocracy, could, of course, not be unreservedly adhered to by Great Britain. It was bound, moreover, to come into conflict in its practical application with the liberal ideas of Alexander I himself. Thus it came about that, whilst the rest of Europe was to

remain subject to autocratic monarchies, the restoration of the Bourbons to the throne of France was made dependent upon the grant by Louis XVIII of a constitution and that the newly created Kingdom of Poland was to be united to the Russian Crown as a semi-independent, constitutionally governed State, with the Emperor of Russia as constitutional King of Poland.

Furthermore, in reconstructing the system of the community of European States, so ruthlessly destroyed by Napoleon's short but omnipotent dictatorship, exercised over all Europe with the sole exception of Russia and Great Britain, the Congress of Vienna did not take into consideration at all the question of nationalities and their natural tendency towards unification—a tendency, obviously dormant, which, however, had not yet begun to assert itself.

And, lastly, the leading part which the Emperor Alexander had been playing at the Congress and in the resettlement of Europe had given to Russia a position of preponderance which, being felt as a threat to the maintenance of the European equilibrium, was bound to lead to the formation of a coalition against Russia such as encompassed her defeat in the Crimean War. It appears, indeed, that the foundation for such a coalition had been laid already at the time of the Congress of Vienna by a secret understanding between Great Britain, France and Austria. A similar motive of hostility to any Power appearing to assume, or actually exercising, preponderance in Europe had caused in the past the formation of powerful coalitions against Louis XIV, Frederick the Great and Napoleon. When after the Crimean War Napoleon III began to assume the part of arbiter of the destinies of Europe, it was this same feeling that caused public opinion in most neutral countries, not excluding the United States, to side with Prussia in the Franco-Prussian War—a feeling that was soon to be reversed with deadly effect, when the megalomania of Junkerdom and Pan-Germanism, coupled with a tactlessly pretentious and offensively provocative diplomacy, had succeeded in concentrating on united Germany the hostility of almost all mankind.

In trying to retrace in summary outline the history of the changing groupings and regroupings of European Powers

in connection with the idea of combating the preponderance of any one of them, I have made use of the expression “European equilibrium” as a literal translation from the French “*équilibre Européen*”—an expression commonly used in diplomatic parlance, meaning the equilibrium of forces in Europe, a thing one hears frequently spoken of, sometimes favourably and sometimes disparagingly, but mostly as the “balance of power.”

Now, in this connection I must observe that these expressions by no means always convey the same idea. Given two groups of Powers whose forces approximately balance, and who therefore represent an equilibrium of forces, the “balance of power” would belong to any Power outside that grouping which, being strong enough for that purpose, could, by joining one or the other side, destroy that equilibrium and secure preponderance and victory to the side so favoured, and which, on the other hand, by holding in reserve its potential power, could control the situation in its own interest for this or that purpose, or in the common interest for the preservation or restoration of peace.

Such was the position of Russia under Alexander III before she concluded her alliance with France and, by joining one of the sides in the coming contest, gave up her control of the situation which was the surest guarantee of the maintenance of peace, because her still unimpaired and overshadowing potential power was obviously sufficient to discourage either side from attempting the enormous risk of a resort to arms.

Such also was the position of the United States when they had the choice either of using the pressure of their immense potential power and the great weight of their moral authority for the purpose of compelling both nearly exhausted belligerent sides to conclude peace, a peace without victory (or what War Propaganda was pleased to call a “premature” peace—as if the restoration of peace could ever be premature) which, by demonstrating the folly and wickedness of war as an utterly unprofitable sacrifice of lives and treasure, would have been the best and surest way of discouraging so-called “militarism” and of securing as lasting a peace as mankind ever will be capable of keeping ; or else of joining one of the sides in the war and

thereby securing to it the triumph of victory and the satisfaction of a "knock-out blow" administered to the other side, with the resultant ruin of the greater part of Europe, replacement of a defeated "militarism" by a triumphant one, and certainty of a series of new wars in the more or less remote future. For even the most determined optimist on the winning side will hardly be able to bring himself to believe seriously that nations of the white race, numbering between two and three hundred millions, will never rise from the profound depth of ruin and degradation in which they are made to welter at present, and claim the "place in the sun" which is theirs by birthright, on a footing of equality with their present victors.

The consequences of the general adoption of the Prussian system of short-term universal service, originally devised as a means of circumventing oppressive treaty stipulations, were manifold and mostly disastrous from many points of view. The best that can be said for this system is that it affords a means of training the youth of the country in discipline, orderly work and unquestioning submission to lawful authority, at the same time combating illiteracy, spreading some elementary instruction and greatly benefiting the physical condition of the conscripts. The advantages of military training are self-evident indeed, and may be said fully to compensate the conscripts for such hardship as may be entailed in removal from their homes and in deprivation of liberty for a short term of years.

The question may be asked, whether all these advantages might not be secured by a system of conscription, not for military service, but simply for educational purposes, which would confer the same benefits on a perhaps even greater number of youths and would at the same time provide ample human material for a volunteer professional army of such size as might be required by a State whose aim would be, not the pursuit of an imperialistic foreign policy, but solely the maintenance of law and order within its confines, and defence in case of attack by a foreign enemy.

I can see, of course, the reply that would be returned to such a question, namely, that the proposed plan would answer very well if all Powers, without exception, were to abjure the pursuit of what is generally meant by the term

"a forward foreign policy," and were willing to settle by negotiation or submit to arbitration any and all questions, not excepting so-called questions of honour or of vital interests, which might arise between them, but that, as long as any one of the Great Powers chooses to maintain the system of universal short-term service, enabling it to put in the field millions of trained soldiers, so long will all other Powers have to do the same, or run the risk of finding themselves in case of attack in a condition of perhaps fatal numerical inferiority.

Far be it from me to contest the soundness of this argument. The remedy would obviously be the creation of some supreme power able to enforce general disarmament, or rather general abolition of compulsory universal military service, and limitation of professional standing armies; able also to curb the ambitions of individual Powers and to compel their obedience to its dictates. It is, however, no less obvious that contemporary mankind will never submit to such enormous power being entrusted to a supreme Power such as in the ancient world was actually exercised by Rome and for some time secured indeed the peace of the world—the *Pax Romana*.

The only chance, therefore, of creating such a supreme Power would lie in the organization of all civilized mankind as a League of Nations, to whose supremacy all individual nations would render voluntary allegiance. This would undoubtedly be an ideal solution of the problem. Only, what stands in the way of its realization is the need to which President Wilson called attention in his address to the Italian Parliament—the need of a new international psychology.

But then the World War, with its accompaniment of a skilfully organized propaganda, has intensified the traditional international psychology of distrust, of hatred and of revenge, and one would indeed be embarrassed in trying to discover at present any symptom of a serious abatement of its influence. The present abortive attempt at creating a League of Nations proved abortive for the very reason that it was plainly an outflow of that same international psychology, and that it had created, not a league of all nations, but a coalition of two principal nations, with two

others admitted on a footing of, so to speak, limited equality, and a numerous following of minor ones relegated to the back of the stage, at the same time excluding the two greatest nations, numbering more than two hundred million souls and occupying by far the greatest part of the European continent, one of them being put off with the prospect of being admitted to the League after an indeterminate probationary period—if unanimously awarded by its members the requisite certificate of good behaviour—and the other completely ignored and having her territory carved up without even as much as her *ex post factum* consent having been reserved.

Whether this result of the labours of the Peace Conference, as embodied in the Treaty of Versailles, intertwined with the Covenant of the League of Nations, is to be considered an achievement of far-seeing statesmanship, is a question which need not be here discussed. As a Russian, however, I may perhaps be permitted to express my sense of gratification in finding that the sound and generous instinct of the American people seems to show a decided reluctance to endorse a settlement sanctioning among other things the dismemberment of my country.

Whatever may be the likelihood of mankind ever acquiring a psychology receptive of the ideal of a true League of Nations, there is one way in which the danger of war may be successfully eliminated: it is by discarding the sinister and fatal fallacy of the famous dictum, "If you wish for peace, prepare for war."

The two great nations to whom belongs the leadership of mankind have shown us the way, by preparing, not for war, but for peace. Ever since the conclusion between them of the Convention of 1817, the boundary-line of some three thousand miles dividing their territories has remained absolutely defenceless on either side, and the two nations have enjoyed the blessings of a century of uninterrupted peace, although on at least two occasions friction has arisen between them such as would have led most probably to an armed conflict if they had been prepared for war, having at their command conscript armies numbering millions, and if they had had in their respective capitals such institutions as "Grand General Staffs" on the European model, with their

pigeon-holes full of elaborate plans for the invasion of their neighbour's dominions.

To anyone who doubts the possibility of such permanent peace as human nature ever will allow being secured by the abolition of universal compulsory military service and the reduction of permanent armies to such dimensions as would be required for maintaining order in the interior—to anyone who entertains such doubts, it would be sufficient to point to the shining example set to the world by Great Britain and the United States of America. In following this example lies the best hope for the future of mankind.

But to return, after this somewhat lengthy digression, to the subject of universal compulsory military service and the consequences of its general adoption.

First introduced as a matter of necessity, it enabled Prussia to train in the course of a few years sufficient men to form an army little inferior in numbers to the armies of her allies, Russia, Great Britain and Austria, and to take an equal part with them in the victorious campaign which ended with the dethronement of Napoleon and the entry of the Allies into Paris.

However, the advantage of the Prussian system did not, apparently, commend itself sufficiently to the Allies to have caused its adoption by any of them. It was only after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1 that the necessity of following Prussia's, or rather since then united Germany's, example, in order to keep pace with her armaments, seems to have been realized by the other Great Powers. But once launched on the road of emulation, a progressive growth of armaments in all continental countries was unavoidable, and, indeed, soon began to assume alarming proportions, naturally entailing a corresponding growth in the respective Budgets of military expenditure. The increasing burden of taxation which had to be imposed on the populations to meet these expenditures was in itself an evil that could not but contribute very materially to the growth of discontent and social unrest which was rife among the masses everywhere.

Besides, in constitutionally governed countries, where the consent of Parliaments to increase military expenditures had to be secured, Governments were led, in order to obtain such consent, to resort to such devices as manœuvring with the

spectre of threatening international complications. This, in its turn, meant the systematic keeping alive and embittering of national animosities, or the creation of new ones when none had existed before; in short, the ministering to that same international psychology which President Wilson declared was the prime necessity of our troubled times to change.

Another consequence of the adoption of the short-term universal service system was the possibility, considered by some as a great advantage, to have always in reserve millions of men partially trained for military service, who could be mobilized at any time. But the huge dimensions of the armies which under this system could be put in the field in case of war rendered necessary the maintenance—apart from the reserve officers who could be again withdrawn from civil life and mobilized for the war—of a greatly enlarged corps of professional officers on permanent service. Thus in every country was being maintained at the public expense hundreds of thousands of men whose sole aim and business in life was war and preparation for war. Let alone the evident loss to a nation resulting from the permanent withdrawal from civil life of such large numbers of the educated classes, it is easy to see what a powerful influence this must have had on the creation of that peculiar mentality of the public mind, commonly termed “militarism,” which was, of course, by no means confined to any one country, and whose extermination was supposed to be one of the principal aims of the World War.

Moreover, the constant irresistible growth of formidable armaments was bound to reach a point where the temptation to utilize them for what was indeed the only justification of their existence, must become irresistible, leaving open only the question as to the precise moment when it would be most advantageous to resort to war, or in other words, when there would be the best chance to surprise the potential adversary in a state of less complete preparedness. There we have the genesis of the idea of a “preventive war,” such as the World War was undoubtedly meant to be in the mind of the German military authorities.

But the most far-reaching consequence of the general adoption of conscription was that it fundamentally altered the

character of future wars. Whilst theretofore wars had been fought by small professional armies at the bidding of rulers whose aims and ambitions they had to serve unreasoningly, without the life of the nations concerned being thereby profoundly affected, henceforth wars carried on by whole nations in arms were bound to become truly wars between peoples, with all the ruinous consequences that would imply.

Thus it became necessary to raise the naturally peaceful disposition of the peoples who had no quarrel with one another to the required fighting pitch and to excite them by artificial instigation to hatred and to fear. Hence the birth of an institution upon which the nations, returned to sanity, will look back with confusion and shame—propaganda, that sinister Moloch, on whose altar millions of lives have been ruthlessly sacrificed, and whose degrading influence has poisoned the minds of whole peoples for a generation with the ignoble virus of hatred and revenge.

If, now, we proceed to an analysis of the second of the conditions mentioned above, which were absent in the beginning of the last century—that is to say, of the European situation as affected by the appearance in an acute form of the question of nationalities—we shall at once perceive that it meant—although Napoleon III was the first to proclaim it as the guiding principle of his policy—the awakening of elemental forces, theretofore dormant, which were destined to play a part of ever-growing importance in the development of events. This awakening manifested itself in two well-defined but apparently contradictory tendencies among the nationalities concerned, either as a tendency towards unification, or as a tendency towards disruption of the political organisms or States of which they were forming parts. The form in which the community of European States had found itself crystallized after the Congress of Vienna had left two great countries, Germany and Italy, in a condition of merely geographical entities, politically divided up into a number of States, which in Germany formed a confederation under the headship of Austria, and which in Italy were quite independent of one another, apart from Lombardy and Venetia, which remained in the possession of Austria. Poland had been partitioned between Russia,

Prussia and Austria. The population of Austria, or as it later became, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, was composed in the main of three nationalities as follows, in the order of their numerical importance : Slavs, Germans and Magyars, the Germans, however, being the dominant nationality ; besides Italians in Lombardy, Venetia, part of Tyrol, Istria and Dalmatia, and Roumanians in Transylvania.

In the Balkan Peninsula the Christian populations of various—mostly Slav—nationalities were in an overwhelming majority but subject to the domination of the Turks. All these heterogeneous elements in the countries of South-Eastern Europe constituted naturally centrifugal forces in the States of which they were component parts and in the eventual disruption of which lay their only hope of achieving independence. On the other hand, the political ideal of the homogeneous populations of the numerous German and Italian States was their unification and organization as a German Empire and a Kingdom of Italy. It was plain, however, that these conflicting tendencies among the European nationalities and their aims, which could only be realized by war or revolution, were bound to keep Europe in a state of perpetual turmoil if there had not been some element of control strong enough to prevent or restrain reckless attempts at breaking the peace.

This restraining influence had been the so-called Holy Alliance, of which Alexander I had been the originator, and which later was reconstructed by his successor, Nicholas I, on a narrower basis, as the "Grand Alliance." But after the French Revolutions of 1830 and 1848, and the revolutionary movements in Germany, Austria and Italy, followed by the Crimean War, nothing, of course, survived of these alliances but a vague something known as the "Concert Européen," the Concert of Europe. This "Concert," as its name alone would imply, was nothing but a loose, or even simply tacit, understanding between the five so-called Great Powers of Europe—Russia, Prussia, Austria, France and Great Britain—to consult together on questions of common interest as they might arise with a view to their settlement by some kind of concerted action.

Napoleon III, who was said to have become in his youth a member of the Italian secret society of the Carbonari,

whose aim was the liberation of Italy, was the first to deal a decisive blow to the shaky edifice of the Concert, whose object was the maintenance of the order established by the Treaties of Vienna, by raising the question of Italian unity on the basis of the rights of nationalities, and by declaring war on Austria in 1859 with the object of her expulsion from Italy. The serious condition of Europe and the likelihood of its ultimate tragic outcome had already impressed itself on the far-seeing mind of that great, perhaps greatest, British statesman of the century, Benjamin Disraeli. In a speech to his constituents shortly before the outbreak of war between France and Austria, he expressed in eloquent and verily prophetic language his fears for the fate of Europe, fears which have all come true.

His words of wisdom, worthy of a great statesman, went unheeded. And yet those were times when statesmanship had not yet been hopelessly swamped by demagoguery, propaganda and the Yellow Press!

Soon after the establishment of the nucleus of the Kingdom of united Italy, which was the result of the war of 1859, an event occurred which was to start Prussia on her ambitious career aiming at the unification of Germany by a policy of "blood and iron," as Bismarck used to express it, an event which might have been prevented, and the history of the world shaped differently, if the "European Concert" had been more than an empty sound and had been willing to uphold the public law of Europe, and the principle of right against the unwarranted assault of might. It was the invasion of the so-called Elbe duchies, Schleswig-Holstein, by the joint forces of Prussia and Austria and their ultimate annexation by Prussia, all of which took place under the eyes of the other three participants of the Concert of the Great Powers, Russia, France and Great Britain. Of these three, Russia alone—I mention this as a tribute to the memory of her Chancellor, Prince Gortschakoff—was willing to protest, the other two for various reasons holding aloof. Part of the inside history of this episode in European diplomatic history is related in Lord Redesdale's *Memories*, to which most interesting and charmingly written book I beg to refer those of my readers who wish for fuller information on this subject.

Those who looked upon the permanent weakness of a divided Germany as best suited to their own interests, and who held it to be a wise and feasible policy indefinitely to oppose the realization by a great nation of some fifty millions of her ideal of the political unification of her country, should have prevented when there was still time this first step towards its realization.

The next step was taken by Prussia barely two years later by declaring war on Austria with the view of ousting her from participation in the German Confederation. This result was obtained by a brief and victorious campaign, wound up by a peace which left the defeated adversary unhumiliated and unharmed and the door open not only for reconciliation but for a possible future alliance as well. The complete unification of Germany, however, was not accomplished, the newly erected North German Confederation not including the South German States, Bavaria, Würtemberg and Baden. Nevertheless, French public opinion being seriously alarmed by the sudden increase of the power of Prussia, Napoleon III found himself in a position where it became incumbent on him, in disregard of his own favourite idea of the rights of nationalities, to oppose any further aggrandizement of Prussia by the absorption of South Germany.

The situation thus created was fraught with danger to the peace of Europe. Napoleon III, after his victorious Crimean campaign, followed up by his victory over Austria in 1859, had become the most influential personage in Europe, and the preponderance of France in European affairs appeared to be well established, with the resultant tendency of the public mind in France to regard any event apparently threatening such preponderance as a grave national peril.

On the other side there was a strong military power, flushed with victory, bent on achieving the realization of a great national political ideal.

In these conditions of public feeling on both sides a clash between the two Powers was unavoidable, as in similar circumstances will presumably always be the case between Powers similarly situated, until the reign of reason shall be established among mankind—if such a happy consummation may ever be hoped for.

The result of Prussia's victory was the unification of Germany and the creation of the German Empire. The right of the German people to form a national State, as that of the Italian people, had been vindicated. But in both cases the recognition of this elemental right had to be conquered by force of arms—in the case of Italy mainly with the aid of France, which had to be paid for by the cession of Nice and Savoy, the cradle of the Italian dynasty ; and in the case of Germany mainly by the military efficiency of Prussia, an apparently complete vindication of Bismarck's policy of " blood and iron."

In the settlement of the war, however, statesmanship on the victor's side had to give way to the inspirations of the military mind, preoccupied with the idea of the necessity of pushing home the " knock-out blow," the result being that, instead of leaving a door open to the possibility of converting a defeated adversary into a potential friend and ally, as had been the case in the settlement of the war with Austria, that door was closed, perchance for ever, by the infliction of conditions which added to the bitterness of military defeat the loss of territory originally indeed conquered from Germany, but since become a part of the living body of France, thereby creating an ever open sore, never to be healed until the day of revenge and restitution, and apparently not even then. Moreover, the phenomenal success of Bismarck's policy of " blood and iron," which in the short space of seven years had raised the small Kingdom of Prussia from the rank of a merely " honorary " Great Power to one of the greatest and most powerful Empires, had produced a disastrous effect on the psychology of the German people, or rather of their officer and Junker caste, and even more pronouncedly, of their " Intellectuals," by developing among them a spirit of overbearing pretentiousness and megalomania, which rendered Germany and her people more and more intensely disliked by all the world.

The perennial historical struggle for supremacy between the Teuton and the Gaul had thus been temporarily decided in favour of the former, but under conditions which rendered its reopening in the future merely a question of time. The latent antagonism between France and Germany became the dominant element in European politics, consciously or

subconsciously influencing the policies of statesmen everywhere and keeping alive the spark which some day was bound to be fanned into the flame of a general European war.

We have seen how and by what means two great nations achieved their unification, although one of them, Italy, had not been completely successful, inasmuch as some Italian populations in Southern Tyrol, Istria with Trieste and partly Dalmatia, still remained under the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, constituting what was known as "Unredeemed Italy"—*Italia Irredenta*, the watchword of militant patriotism—the conquest of which was manifestly the object of Italy's participation in the World War.

The numerous nationalities inhabiting the Balkan Peninsula—Slavs (Serbs, Croats and Bulgarians), Greeks, Roumanians (Moldo-Wallachians) and Albanians—had been for centuries in a state of latent revolt against their Turkish masters. The process of their liberation had been very gradual and had been achieved mainly through the instrumentality of Russia, whose claim to intervention was based partly on racial affinity with the Slavs, who constituted the majority of the population, partly on community of religious faith, not only the Slavs but also the Greeks and the Roumanians belonging to the Greco-Orthodox Church.

The liberation of the Greeks was the first to be completed by the creation of the independent Kingdom of Greece under the Treaty of Adrianople, concluded in 1829 after Russia's victory over Turkey and by the London Convention of 1832, by which Greece was declared to be an independent kingdom under the protectorate of Russia, Great Britain and France, who had been acting more or less in concert throughout and whose united fleets, by the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Navarino, had dealt the first blow to Turkish power in the Peninsula.

As an illustration of the jealousies and bickerings prevailing among the three Allied Powers, I would mention that a foremost British statesman, in announcing to the House of Commons the annihilation of the Turkish fleet by the united squadrons of the three Powers, called it "an untoward event."

The liberation of the Slavs from Turkish domination was entirely the work of Russia, not only unaided by any

of the other Powers, but even to some extent opposed by some of them, from the general apprehension lest Russia's influence might become too powerful on the Balkan Peninsula. Thus when Russia, by the Treaty of San Stefano, had secured the liberation from Turkish vassalage of the principalities of Roumania, Serbia and Montenegro and the organization of Bulgaria with what became known as Eastern Rumelia and part of Macedonia as a vassel principality, the Congress of Berlin, convened for the purpose of revising the Treaty of San Stefano at the instigation of Austria-Hungary and Great Britain, cut in half the newly created principality of Bulgaria and abandoned Macedonia again to Turkish misrule, thereby creating in the Macedonian question a perennial ferment liable at any time to inflame the passions of the rival nationalities of the Balkan Peninsula, and furnishing food for the latent Austro-Russian antagonism.

Another composite State presenting a conglomerate of various nationalities was Austria, or rather, as she was known until lately, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, since Hungary, after Austria's defeat by Prussia in 1866, secured its semi-independence as a separate kingdom, united to Austria merely in the person of the common Sovereign, the Emperor of Austria as King of Hungary.

The majority of the population of the non-Hungarian half of the Dual Monarchy was composed of Slavs belonging to various branches of the Slav race: Poles, Ruthenes, Czechs, Moravians, Slovaks, Serbs, Croatsians, Slovenes, some of them Roman Catholics like the Czechs and Poles, some belonging to the Greco-Orthodox Church, politically mostly at odds with each other, a circumstance which the Austrian Government's policy used to exploit in its own interest, practising with more or less, mostly less, skill the ancient rule, "Divide et imperia." The result was that most of the Austrian Slavs, except, of course, the Poles, even the Roman Catholics like the Czechs, took to coquetting with Russian Slavophiles, finding willing response from that particular element of the Russian "Intelligentzia," to some extent even favoured by popularity-hunting parts of the ruling bureaucracy.

The Austro-Hungarian Government, as might have been expected, retaliated by entertaining underhand rela-

tions with so-called Mazeppists, or Ukrainophiles in Russia, ready to conspire against the unity and welfare of their fatherland. These conditions, superadded to the forward policy pursued by Russian agents with the connivance or the toleration of their Government in the Slav countries of the Balkan Peninsula, which was considered to create a perennial menace to the security of the Dual Monarchy, contributed not a little towards embittering Austro-Russian relations.

The populations of Polish nationality, owing official allegiance to three different States, were placed in a peculiarly difficult situation, always exposed to the danger in case of a falling-out among themselves of the three Empires, of having to fight their own kin in the armies of the warring Powers. The Poles of Galicia, enjoying exclusively considerate treatment at the hands of the Austrian Government, because they were usually willing to support the Government's policy in its contentions with their rivals, the Czechs, were as a rule loyal to Austria, the Vienna Government in its turn leaving them a free hand and even favouring them in their oppression of the "Ruthenian," or as they would now be called "Ukrainian," part of the population of Eastern Galicia. The Poles of the Kingdom and of the Polish provinces of Prussia were divided in their antipathies—there could hardly be any question of sympathies—between Germany and Russia—the balance being perhaps in favour of Russia, because the process of denationalization of the Poles was being carried on under Prussian rule with infinitely more energy and harshness than in Russian Poland, where the methods of Russification practised by our bureaucracy was mitigated always by their inefficacy, sometimes by their ludicrous clumsiness and generally by the inefficiency of the personnel entrusted with their application.

From whichever point of view one chose to regard the question of Poland and the Polish nationality, it should have been perfectly plain even to the most blundering incompetence that this question was destined to play a most important part in the development of coming events and demanded the most careful consideration and the most enlightened treatment at the hands of Russian statesmen,

if there had been any such at the head of affairs in the supreme crisis of the country's history.

Another condition connected with the question of nationalities was the growing estrangement between Russia and Germany, which had its source in the development of intellectual movements in both countries—Pan-Slavism and Pan-Germanism—which, unchecked, were plainly destined to become equally fatal to both. The growing influence in both countries of these movements, supported by militaristic statesmanship, led to the conclusion of the Austro-German Alliance aimed at Russia and joined later by Italy, and then as a counterpoise directed against Germany, of the Franco-Russian Alliance.

Thus was created the system of alliances completed by the *entente* with Great Britain, Germany's commercial, industrial and naval rival, which rendered the final outbreak of a general war, as soon as any two of the Powers concerned should fall out, automatically unavoidable. Inasmuch as the Russia-haters in Germany and the Germany-haters in Russia—both parties representing small but noisy and powerful minorities—had contributed to bring about this result, they may both lay claim to having achieved the ruin of their respective countries, whose greatness and prosperity a century and a half of peace and goodwill between them had helped to build up.

I hope that in thus briefly reviewing the condition of things in Europe as I found it at the time when I was about to settle down in Paris, I have succeeded in making my readers see the reason why I was so profoundly impressed with the proximity of the outbreak of the general European war as to make up my mind to attempt the Quixotic task of trying, single-handed and alone, to arrest the fatal tendencies in our Government circles which I felt convinced would end by landing us in an irreparable catastrophe.

CHAPTER XXX

Forebodings of a European war—Russia's handicaps—Railways—Munition factories—The bureaucracy—Kokovtseff as Prime Minister—Iswolsky—The Balkan League—An anonymous attack—My secret memorandum to the Emperor—My "German" name—The "Great Slav Idea."

BEFORE endeavouring to explain why I looked upon the participation of Russia in a general European war, which I felt to be impending, as being bound to end in a catastrophe, I must state that these sinister forebodings, from which I could not free myself, were not solely connected with apprehensions of a military defeat. They covered a far wider field; they were shared by many ardent patriots trembling for the fate of our country, they should have been ever present in the minds of those who controlled the destiny of a great Empire, and they should have halted them on the brink of the precipice over which they were about to plunge with purblind and reckless improvidence.

In the first place, in weighing the chances of success or failure in a prospective war it would have been the prime duty of circumspect statesmanship to consider the entirely novel conditions of warfare as determined by the colossal size of modern armies and by the corresponding development of ever more perfected means of destruction. To meet these novel conditions two things were obviously needed: a highly efficient organization in all activities of the State directed towards carrying on such a war, and the highest grade of technical development and the greatest possible number of industrial establishments capable of being immediately adapted to the production of war material in almost unlimited quantities. Our manifest deficiency in both these respects could not possibly be unknown to the Government. To begin with, a talent for organization has never been among the characteristics of an otherwise

much-gifted nation. Not only that, but some of the fundamental qualities making for efficiency in organization—painstaking attention to detail, precision in planning and accuracy in execution—are with us somehow less appreciated in practice than they deserve. To anyone possessing but the slightest acquaintance with the clumsy slowness and limited efficiency of the working of our huge bureaucratic apparatus, the hope of its ever proving capable of meeting the formidable demands which would be made upon it by the conduct of a general European war must have appeared rather illusory.

Nor were the material conditions in which that apparatus would have to function at all commensurate to the task of feeding and supplying with war material the millions of men we should have to send to the front to invade our potential enemies' dominions. A glance at a map of our net of railways and another at the railway maps of Germany and France would have revealed our fatal inferiority in this respect to our adversaries as well as to our allies. This deficiency alone, which could only be remedied in the course of time, was certainly sufficient to have constituted a most serious handicap in the event of a war with any Power better equipped in this respect, let alone a Power like Germany whose most complete network of Government railways was specially designed to serve strategic ends, besides satisfying the needs of commerce and circulation.

As far as I am aware, this momentous defect in our armament was repeatedly pointed out to our Government, and the necessity of its being remedied as speedily as possible was pressed upon it by the French Government as a duty we owed to our ally no less than to ourselves. The experience of the Crimean War, when the absence of railway communications rendered it impossible for us to concentrate our troops in the Crimea in time to prevent the landing of the French and English Armies, should have taught us the lesson of the danger of cultural backwardness in an armed conflict with highly civilized nations.

The failure to take in hand betimes the construction of strategic railways may have been due simply to the usual inertness and slow-moving deliberateness of our bureaucratic machinery, or, perhaps, to a desire to give the preference

to the building of such railways as were sorely needed for the peaceful development of the country, over the satisfaction of the claims of strategy. This would, indeed, have been an economically sound and truly patriotic policy to pursue in the matter of railway construction, but for the fact that we had tied our hands by an alliance which sooner or later was bound to involve us in a war with our Western neighbours, and which gave unquestionably to our ally and, moreover, creditor to the tune of many billions of francs, the right to claim that we should at all times be ready to take a really efficient part by his side in the expected contest. Nothing, however, at the time to which I refer, had been done to supply adequately this most important deficiency, which was liable to, and in the sequel actually did, play a very disastrous part in the development of military events.

Another and no less glaring deficiency was the very limited capacity of our Government, as well as private establishments, for the production of war material of any kind and the unlikelihood of its being possible to remedy it as quickly as it might have become necessary. To rely on being supplied with war material by our allies would be possible only if they experienced no pressing need of such material themselves and if our communications with the outer world by way of the Black Sea were not closed, as they would surely be by way of the Baltic—a circumstance entirely dependent on the attitude which Turkey might adopt in the coming war.

These handicaps were serious enough to raise grave doubts as to the possibility of a successful campaign against our Western neighbours, so greatly superior to us in all preliminary conditions making for success in war, such as organization, ways of communication and armament. But still graver doubts in this regard could not but be felt by those who had followed the course of military events in our war with Japan, which had not produced a single leader of more than average capacity and had not given us a single victory over our adversary, who, whatever his conspicuous bravery, his perfect discipline and all-round efficiency, would hardly be accounted superior to the principal enemy we should have to encounter in a general war in Europe. (As to this

failure to win a single victory I may possibly be mistaken, if the story related by General Sir Ian Hamilton, in his book on the Russo-Japanese War is to be believed—how the battle of Laoyang, of which he was an eye-witness, had been won by the Japanese solely because our Commander-in-Chief, for some unaccountable reason, ordered a retreat at the very moment when the battle had been practically won by us, and that the part of the book containing this account of the battle had been suppressed at the request of the Japanese Government.)

The most important lesson, however, to be derived from our experience in the Japanese War which should have been most earnestly taken to heart by our ruling spheres—military as well as political—was that nowadays, with armies raised under the system of universal compulsory short-term service, wars may not be waged successfully when the soldiery are not conscious of nor understand the cause for which they are called upon to risk their lives.

That this lesson would apply in the fullest measure to our eventual participation in the general European war which I saw coming was my firm conviction, as well as that we should rue the day when we had recklessly cast to the winds the solemn warning it conveyed. My conviction was based on the following reasoning :

The coming war, whatever the immediate cause, or rather pretext, of its outbreak, and whether or not begun by only two of the six Powers participating in the two hostile alliances, would, by the play of this system of alliances, automatically at once involve them all.

The war, therefore, whose real meaning, whatever its ostensible aims, would be a renewal of the perennial historic struggle between Gaul and Teuton for supremacy on the Continent of Europe, would imply the employment by the chief contestants as well as by their allies of all the armed forces at their disposal; that is to say, of millions upon millions of combatants.

In these conditions a war could never be quickly won by either side by a military event such as a Jena, a Waterloo, a Sadowa or a Sedan ; it could only be ended by the total material or moral exhaustion or collapse of one of the sides

or of both, after a long protracted struggle whose duration it would be impossible to foresee.

Such a war could only be carried on for any length of time with any hope of victory by armies fully comprehending the cause for which they were fighting, or else animated by passionate feelings of hatred of the enemy or capable of having these feelings excited by skilful propaganda to the necessary fighting pitch.

In both these respects the millions of Russian peasants to be mobilized would undoubtedly be found entirely deficient, as our experience in the war with Japan should have taught us.

My doubts, therefore, were well grounded as regards our being in a position to count on a victory in the event of our participation in a general war in Europe. I might mention here, by the way, that similar doubts seemed to haunt the minds of those who were responsible for the destiny of the Empire at the very moment when war had just been declared. At any rate, at a solemn reception held at the Winter Palace two or three days after the beginning of hostilities, when our troops were already advancing into East Prussia, I remember the Emperor winding up his address to the Members of the Council and Duma of the Court and of the highest bureaucracy with the vow that, having drawn the sword, he would not lay it down as long as a single enemy soldier remained on Russian soil—or words to that effect, similar to those used by the Emperor Alexander I when Napoleon's armies had invaded Russian territory in 1812. On the same occasion I remember having incidentally asked one of the members of the Government whether he knew what was intended to be done in regard to the gold reserve of the Bank of Russia, to which the Minister replied that it was already being transferred to Kasan for safety. All of which did not betoken much confidence in a victorious issue of the campaign just opened.

Although, of course, the question of victory or defeat was a matter of the gravest concern to me, I was profoundly convinced that what was really at stake in either case was infinitely more than a mere question of military success or failure, that it was the very existence of the Empire that was hanging in the balance, because the fact alone of our

participation in a war on the scale of a general European war was bound to create conditions which could not fail to open the floodgates to the rising tide of revolution.

First among these conditions would be the breakdown of the bureaucratic apparatus under the strain of the demands which the conduct of a war on so vast a scale would necessarily make on almost all its branches. I do not propose to join the popular chorus of systematic detractors of the Russian bureaucracy, nor do I wish to minimize its many sins and shortcomings. There is one thing, however, which even its most uncompromising enemies may not deny, and that is that the whole social and political fabric of the State was the result of, and had been built up by, two centuries of patient, sometimes blundering, but unremitting, effort put forth by this same much-decried bureaucracy. Now that its complete destruction has been accomplished by two short years of the sanguinary tyranny of Bolshevism, the inestimable value of the work of the bureaucracy is beginning to be realized and regretfully acknowledged, even by those who welcomed its downfall as the dawn of a new and happier era.

But what is said here is not meant to suggest that the bureaucratic apparatus, if it had not been first completely disorganized and finally demolished by the Revolution, would have been able to bear the enormous strain of the war. On the contrary, it was the utter breakdown of such parts of that apparatus as the railway administration and the supply of food and war material to such enormous armies as would have to be put in the field—it was just this breakdown which, in my opinion, was primarily to be apprehended, not merely as certain to imperil the success of a campaign, but as likely to lead to a state of chaos of which the revolutionary parties would not fail to take advantage for the furtherance of their plans.

In judging of the possibility of our bureaucracy being able to withstand the enormous pressure of a war it should always have been kept in view that the bureaucratic apparatus, however enormous in size and imposing in appearance, was no longer capable of successfully coping with the task of giving the one hundred and seventy millions of the heterogeneous populations of an immensely overgrown Empire the really efficient government they required. The

bureaucracy, being part and parcel of the "Intelligentzia," no less than the political parties, "bourgeois" as well as revolutionary, who were aiming at its overthrow, was labouring under the same fundamental disadvantage which has been the curse of Russia ever since her entry under Peter the Great into the community of European nations as a member on a footing of equality—the fatal separation of the educated classes from the enormous bulk of the nation by an unbridgeable gulf of mutual non-comprehension.

And that is the reason why the pride and glory of the bureaucracy, its handiwork and creation, the superb edifice of the State, however imposing and solid in appearance, was not nor could have been an organic growth having its roots deep in the soil upon which it was erected, but was an artificial superstructure that could be tumbled down like a house of cards by a sufficiently powerful shock from without or from within. In the minds of the people, however, it was still surrounded like its builder and sole support, the bureaucracy, with the halo of legitimacy as an emanation of the will of the only legitimate source of authority, the will of the Lord's Anointed, of the Tsar. So long as this ideal of the divine origin of the Sovereign Power was still a living force, was not undermined and destroyed in the minds of the people, so long the edifice would stand. It certainly required fundamental alterations and improvements. Its perfectibility had been amply demonstrated by its history in the past. Its perfectibility in the future could be questioned only by those who were bent on its destruction. With its standing erect and unshaken was bound up all the future of the country, its unity, safety and greatness. Its fall would mean—and did mean, as subsequent events have shown—disruption, anarchy and chaos. Its preservation, therefore, from the danger of war and revolution should have been the prime duty of Russian statesmanship.

War, for Russia, whatever its course and outcome, meant the certainty of the advent of revolution. The lesson of the Japanese War should never have been forgotten. It certainly had not been forgotten by the revolutionary parties. Justly attributing the failure of the Revolution of 1905 to the fact that not only the guards but a sufficiently large part of the Army had remained faithful to their oath,

they had directed with redoubled energy their efforts among the soldiery of the regular Army, as far as preventive measures and more strictly enforced discipline would allow, and principally among the millions of the peasantry who as soldiers of the reserve would be mobilized in case of war.

It was easy to see, one would have thought, what a formidable danger, not to the foreign enemy, but to their own country, these hordes of armed peasantry might become, seething with discontent and hatred of the educated and ruling classes, with their baser instincts of envy and greed inflamed by the promise held out to them by the revolutionary propaganda of the coming distribution among them of the estate owners' lands.

That foreign statesmen, ignorant of real conditions in our country, and looking upon Russia mainly as a purveyor of an unlimited supply of cannon fodder, should have based any calculations and placed any reliance upon the so-called "Russian steam roller" may be comprehensible to some extent. But what seemed to be difficult to understand was how it could be possible that there should be found thinking Russians so blind to the reality of things as to entertain any illusions whatever in this regard. Yet there were such among the Duma leaders and their following, of the Octobrist no less than of the Cadet Parties, who were stanch supporters of the Government's foreign policy, which, if persisted in, could only lead to a general European war, and who presumably failed to realize that our participation in such a war would be bound to open the door to revolution.

Whether this was so, or whether they hoped to be borne into power on the crest of the wave of the revolution, which could then be dealt with as easily as was that of 1905, I am unable to say and prefer not to express a surmise which might do injustice to their intelligence or their good faith. There were also those—I cannot believe there were many—who were willing to stake the very existence of the Empire on the chances of war in the hope that a victorious outcome would strengthen the position of the Government and prevent the possibility of a revolution.

All these momentous questions, lightly touched upon in the preceding pages, had been the subject of frequent exhaustive and earnest discussions between the late Count

Witte and myself in our daily walks and drives during the Peace Conference at Portsmouth. Barring some divergences of opinion on diplomatic matters—to which I have referred at some length in a preceding chapter—we were entirely of one mind in regard to all main points and above all in regard to the absolute necessity for Russia to remain at peace with all the world.

But then Count Witte had been, like myself, relegated to the innocuous inactivity of the Council of the Empire or Upper House of the Russian Parliament; he was notoriously disliked personally and even distrusted by the Sovereign, and he had no means whatever of influencing the policy of the Government.

His successor, Stolypin, was the last really strong man we ever had at the helm of the ship of State. Had he lived, he might have saved the country.

But it was not to be. Stolypin fell a victim to the assassin's bullet, and he was succeeded in the office of Prime Minister by a man who himself would hardly have claimed to be a strong man.

The new Prime Minister, Mr. (created later Count) Kokovtseff, was a typical bureaucrat in the best sense of the word. He had rendered invaluable services to the State as Minister of Finance, an office which he continued to hold in conjunction with that of Prime Minister. It was owing to his cautious and skilful administration of our finances that Russia had been able to traverse unaffected in her credit the double crisis of the Japanese War and the subsequent Revolution. He was a man of the highest personal character, of spotless integrity and enlightened views. I also believe his views in matters of foreign policy to have been entirely sound. But he did not seem to have been in a position to exercise the influence which one usually associates with the idea of the Premiership. Besides, he was retired from his offices, both as Premier and as Minister of Finance, five months before the outbreak of the war, and cannot be held responsible in any way whatever for the fatal results of a policy which he had never been in a position to control.

I regret not to be able to say as much of Mr. Sazonoff, who had succeeded Mr. Iswolsky as Minister of Foreign Affairs on the appointment of the latter, whose assistant

he had been, to the post of Ambassador in Paris. In rendering a willing tribute to his honourable character as a gentleman and to the purity of his intentions, I can only say that it was not his fault, but his misfortune, as it was the evil star of Russia, that he should have been fated to play one of the leading parts in the most awful tragedy the world has ever seen.

He had, moreover, the additional misfortune to succeed at the head of the Foreign Department the last really competent Minister we ever had, and to become in the sequel the object of egregious flattery in the Press of the allied countries, such as was subsequently and for the same motive showered on the mulish Miliukoff, the sinister Kerensky and the preposterous Terestchenko.

I have previously expressed the high regard I always entertained for Mr. Iswolsky as a real statesman in the European sense, competent to deal with his colleagues of Western nations on a footing of equality. Although I have always been a confirmed opponent of the political system of which he was an adept, and the fatal results of which it was his tragic destiny to realize before his untimely end, I feel bound, as a last tribute to his memory, to give expression to my conviction that had he continued at the head of our Foreign Department he would never have become a tool in the hands of others ; and my belief that when in the winter of 1916-17 it had become abundantly evident that the salvation of Russia, and for the matter of that of the whole world, depended on the conclusion of a general peace, he would have insisted—and he would have assuredly known how to insist—on the recognition by the Allies of Russia's right to have her voice listened to with the respect to which she was entitled in a matter that was for her a matter of life or death.

At the time to which I refer in this chapter—that is to say, in the summer of 1912—it was perfectly evident to anyone who followed in the reports of the Press the course of events in the Balkan Peninsula—and, having severed my connection with the Foreign Department, there were no other sources of information accessible to me—that the weakening of the Ottoman Empire, consequent upon the perturbed internal condition created by the Turkish

Revolution of 1908 and the military reverses suffered in the war with Italy, was certain to embolden the several Christian States of the Balkan Peninsula, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro, to unite in an effort to satisfy their various territorial claims by force of arms and in the complete dismemberment of European Turkey.

The formation of this Balkan League was said to have been favoured by our diplomacy in the somewhat naïve belief that it would be directed against Austria-Hungary. Whether there was any truth in this story I am unable to say. Meanwhile the Great Powers had been seriously concerned about the maintenance of peace in the Balkans, and after due deliberation had determined upon a concerted diplomatic action in the shape of representations by the Ministers of Russia and Austria-Hungary, acting as mandatories of the Powers, to be made at the Balkan capitals on October 8th, to the effect (1) that the Powers would reprove any belligerent action; (2) that they would assist in securing reforms in the administration of European Turkey which would not infringe on the sovereignty of the Sultan or the integrity of the Ottoman Empire; (3) that in case of war they would not permit at the end of the conflict any modification of the territorial *status quo* in European Turkey.

For their superior wisdom in attempting to lecture four independent—albeit only Balkan—Powers disposing jointly of armed forces numbering about half a million men and bent on attacking Turkey for the very purpose of its dismemberment, to lecture them on the subject of the sovereignty of the Sultan and the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and to threaten them with the formidable spectre of the *status quo*, that *pons asinorum* of embarrassed diplomacy in the presence of ticklish problems, the originators, whoever they may have been, of this remarkable plan of concerted diplomatic action were rewarded by the receipt of telegraphic intelligence to the effect that on that very same day—October 8, 1912—the Prince of Montenegro had severed diplomatic relations with Turkey and declared war!

It was plain that once a burning match had been thrown into that powder magazine of the Balkans it would not take

long for the train of powder laid from there to the two nearest European capitals to explode the gigantic mine which was to shake a continent, and in the planting of which all the Great Powers had had their share, until, by the conclusion of the Franco-Russian Alliance and the *entente* with Great Britain, the division of Europe in two irreconcilably hostile camps had been completed.

The danger seemed imminent. If anything could be attempted to avert it, it would have to be done without delay.

That is why I made up my mind, then and there, to do what will be succinctly related below. Before proceeding with my narrative, however, I beg to apologize to my readers for having had, and for being obliged to continue, to introduce so frequently the personal pronoun in the tale I have to tell. The fact that these pages contain merely personal reminiscences and lay no claim whatever to pass for history, may perhaps serve as an excuse, if not a justification, for my abuse of a form of speech which sounds more egotistical than it is meant to be.

The task I had determined to undertake, the task of sounding a warning and of pointing out the imminence of the danger to which would lead the course of policy we had been pursuing for the last twenty-five years, was not only an ungrateful but also a hopeless one. Both ungrateful and hopeless because it meant swimming against a powerful current, not only of official policy but likewise of what passes for public opinion. It had been initiated by the Court, and the Court was wedded to it. Fashion had sanctioned it. Society had adopted it as its fetish. Those who understood how little it corresponded to the real interests of the country and foresaw how catastrophal for Russia would be the outcome of the war it was leading up to, dared not oppose it for fear of being considered "pro-German," especially if they bore a German name, and had sufficient self-respect not to plead that they were of Dutch, or Swedish, or Danish, or Norwegian descent. It is one of the peculiar and regrettable characteristics of our society that no one is supposed to be simply and solely "pro-Russian" and to be in his views in matters of foreign policy unbiased by any sentimental leanings "pro" this or "pro" that country.

In no country that I know of has this singular predominance of the question of "orientation," as they call it, in the direction of some foreign country or other, any existence comparable, in the intensity and bitterness it engenders, to conditions existing in contemporary Russia. This predominance was, indeed, characteristic of the state of society in the Poland of the eighteenth century, where the feelings it summoned forth were raging with particular virulence, and it led in the end to the downfall and partition of the country among its neighbours.

As far as I was personally concerned this state of things meant a serious handicap in my endeavours to make the ruling Powers realize the dangerous character of the policy they were pursuing, since whatever I might have to say would be attributed to the fact of my bearing a German name. This was, indeed, the conclusive argument brought forward by a very distinguished Polish gentleman, who in an anonymous article in a French review attacked me—in perfectly courteous terms, I am pleased to say—on the subject of my views on the international situation and the policy of Russia as developed in a secret memorandum submitted to the Emperor which I had had printed as a secret document at the Government printing office, for distribution among the leading personages of the Government and of the Houses of Parliament, and the proof sheets of which had fallen into the hands of my critic, as he mentions himself in his article.

There was, of course, nothing new for me in such an argument. When I had advocated avoidance of a conflict with Japan, I had been accused of being pro-Japanese; when at the time of the Boer War I had been in favour of a friendly understanding with Great Britain instead of joining the chorus of senseless vituperation against her which was then prevalent all over the world, I was suspected of being pro-English, just as now if I tried to oppose a policy which was bound to lead to a war with our Western neighbours I would be reproached with being "pro-German." The difference would be only that in the two former cases, my name being neither Japanese nor English, it could not be used for the purpose of impeaching the disinterestedness of my political opinions, whereas in the latter case, my name

being unquestionably German, my opponents would be sure to utilize it to invalidate my arguments with what they would think crushing effect.

Against similar insinuations I was, of course, defenceless. They were not, however, to be considered a quite negligible quantity, because already the peculiar mentality was prevalent in Russia which made our Government change the name of the capital of the country from St. Petersburg to Petrograd, a mentality which one would hardly consider to fit its possessors for the task of presiding over the destinies of a great nation.

Whilst in a sense my name alone was a serious handicap, it was rendered even more so by the fact that it was accompanied by the nowadays entirely meaningless title of "Baron," which stamped me as a descendant of a long line of Knights who seven centuries ago had invaded what is now Esthonia and Livonia. First, as an independent order of Knighthood, then under the Sovereignty of Denmark, further of Sweden, and lastly, since Peter the Great of Russia, they had administered the country more or less autonomously, had raised it to a comparatively high degree of civilization and prosperity, and had always been counted among the most loyal subjects of their Sovereigns—all of which brands their unfortunate descendants with the mysterious odium of "feudalism," although they may have long ceased to have any connection whatever with the lands so "iniquitously" possessed by their ancestors for many centuries.

On the other hand, this very handicap protected me from the suspicion of entertaining any views of personal ambition whatever. The same Polish gentleman, himself a former member of the Council of the Empire (a member by election having served his term), alludes to this circumstance in a playful but entirely convincing and conclusive way in the following sentences, which I quote from his above-mentioned article :

If an old and malicious member of the Council is to be believed, the members of the noble Assembly (of course those appointed by the Crown) are divided into two categories : those who are "seated" and those who are still "climbing." Has M. de Rosen definitively "seated" himself ? During the last session he has appeared on the

tribune with distinction. Nevertheless there is no reason to believe that he is "climbing." He is too well advised not to know that in these times of morbid nationalism to be appointed to a post of first-class importance it is first of all necessary to be in possession of a name ending in "off," "eff," or "in." [These are terminations of purely Russian names; the author of the article does not even mention terminations in "o," "e," or "sky," all of which cast on a name the suspicion of "Little Russianism," or even, more dreadful still, of "Polonism."] I believe that he simply takes an interest in world events: *Quorum pars magna fuit*. No one is more entitled to do it, nor is more competent.

I have quoted this unexceptionable testimony of a distinguished Polish gentleman, who hardly could be suspected of not being a sufficiently ardent adherent of the "Entente," because it controverts one of the favourite legends industriously spread abroad by the war propaganda, namely, that of the predominance of "German influence" supposed to have existed in Russia, at Court and in the Government, and to have been exercised by "Baltic Barons" and other Russian subjects of German descent, inasmuch as it points so plainly to the reason why it would have been impossible even for a man like myself, with nothing German about him but his name, to aspire to any really important and influential position in the Government.

Moreover, when the Polish gentleman in question, in the above-quoted passage of his article, refers to "these times of morbid nationalism," he alludes to the unquestionable predominance of a specifically Great Russian nationalism hostile to all the numerous nationalities composing the population of the Russian Empire and its outlying dominions: Poles, German Balts, Finlanders (both Finns and Swedes), Jews, Georgians, Armenians, and even including Little Russians or so-called "Ukrainians." This hostility had latterly assumed a markedly concentrated character specially directed against Germany, partly under the influence of the Pan-Slavistic belief in the imminent clash between the Slav and the Teuton worlds, and partly in reliance on the encouragement derived from the latent hostility of the Entente towards Germany.

To this strongly pronounced anti-German current in Russia corresponded a no less marked and influential anti-Russian current in Germany, in both cases mostly confined

to the middle-class "Intelligentzia" and to military circles always eager for a clash of arms, to a limited degree only affecting the upper classes, hardly at all the aristocracy, and not at all the popular masses, in spite of all the efforts of "propaganda" to make it appear in a different light. Between them these two currents were mainly instrumental in undermining the dam that held back the threatening flood of the world catastrophe, and the leaders of these movements, both in Russia and in Germany may justly lay claim—I repeat it once more—to the glory of having effectually contributed to bring about the World War, and to have thereby succeeded in achieving, in four short years, the ruin and destruction of their respective countries, whose greatness and prosperity a century and a half of undisturbed peace and friendly relations between them had helped to build up.

But this is an all-important subject, to which I shall have to revert in another chapter, when endeavouring to contribute my modest share to the elucidation of the complicated causes and conditions which led up to the outbreak of the World War—a matter treated with consummate skill and a great judge's lofty impartiality by Earl Loreburn in his admirable book *How the War Came*, which I may perhaps be able to supplement with some data theretofore unknown to its author.

For the present, before I proceed to give a brief synopsis of the secret memorandum I had prepared for submission to the Sovereign, I can only repeat that in taking this step I had in view no end but that of serving to the best of my understanding what I held to be the true interests of my Sovereign and my country.

I likewise venture to hope that I may be allowed some indulgence if, in the sequel of my narrative, when dealing with the acts of men whose cruel fate it has been to become unwittingly the artisans of their country's ruin, it will not always have been possible for me to repress entirely the bitterness that cannot but fill the soul of one who, after half a century's devoted service to his country, finds himself a fugitive from his native land, having had to witness in helpless rage the destruction of all he has lived and worked for as a result of policies he has always opposed with word and with pen to the best of his ability.

Having explained the reason which prompted me to undertake the delicate and difficult task of laying before the Sovereign a sufficiently lucid and unbiased exposé of the international situation resultant from the policy hitherto pursued, so as to enable him to draw therefrom, without being prompted, his own conclusions, I may now state in a few propositions my own point of view, as regards the true interests of Russia, from which I intended to illuminate the situation in my memorandum :

Russia occupying geographically the greater part of the Continent of Europe and the whole northern part of the Continent of Asia, should be considered politically as a continent by itself, situated between the two, self-contained and self-sufficient, like the United States ;

She has reached the extreme limits of her possible expansion in Europe ;

She has no political nor cultural mission to perform in Europe, being culturally inferior to older nations ;

Russia's size and potential power alone serve her as a perfectly sufficient guarantee of her territorial integrity and commanding political position as long as she does not herself attempt an aggressive policy, for the successful pursuit of which she lacks the aptitude and to which the genius of the Russian people is averse ;

Russia's cultural mission lies exclusively in Asia, in the development of her gigantic Siberian Empire, and in the spread of her culture, which is inferior to Western European culture, but vastly superior to that of her Central Asiatic neighbours, to whom Russian domination has been of unquestionable benefit ;

Russia is strong enough not only to stand alone by herself, but also, so long as her hands are untied, to hold the balance of power in Europe, no general war being possible without her participation or connivance ;

The only rational policy for Russia to pursue is that which Washington, in his Farewell Address, recommended to his countrymen : abstention from entangling alliances of whatsoever kind with whomsoever.

It is easy to see how these views could provoke the dissatisfaction of those who expected to derive from the outcome of a general war in Europe some substantial benefit for their

cause. That seems to have been the reason why the same Polish gentleman, at the end of his article dissecting my memorandum, in speaking of his conversations with some personages having access to the highest circles and being acquainted with the contents of that document, relates that, barring some matters of detail, they were in full accord with my ideas, adding the indignant exclamation: "And yet they are all patriots!"

This sarcastic remark, applied to some few evidently distinguished Russians, who presumed to be "patriots" of their own country, is rather illuminating, it seems to me. It reflects the real attitude toward Russia and the Russian people of all those who apprehended lest their expectation of a war between Russia and her Western neighbours might fail of realization through a reluctance of the Russian Government to engage in such an adventure from motives of mere "Russian patriotism."

It must be owned, however, that the bulk of Russian society was not without deserving such treatment at the hands of those in whose cause its leaders and representatives were ready to risk the welfare and the very existence of their country—a treatment the cruel humiliation of which is now brought home to them with a vengeance by these same hands.

The work I had determined to take in hand was by no means an easy one. It occupied all my time during the summer of 1912, which we were spending at Dinard, on the picturesque coast of Brittany. My object being, naturally, to produce the impression I desired on the Emperor's mind, and knowing his character given to jealousy of his authority and suspiciousness of people's motives, I had to be most careful to avoid even the faintest appearance of wishing to tender unsought advice, which would have been sure to indispose him and to defeat the very object I had in view.

On the other hand, I had to guard against the possibility of being suspected of some ulterior motive or ambitious design of my own in having my memorandum submitted to him. I therefore decided to give it as near as possible the form and the character of a historical treatise on the subject of "The European policy of Russia." It was furthermore

necessary, in regard to questions not essential to the aim I had in view, to avoid anything that might needlessly shock the Emperor's prejudices or preconceived ideas; wherefore I had either to tone down my own opinions or else to avoid touching upon them at all.

All this, obviously, could not but impair to some extent not only the literary, but also the political value of my dissertation. But I had to sacrifice it to the importance of gaining the main point, that of arousing the Emperor to a realization of the danger to which his policy was exposing his throne and the country.

The memorandum deals first with the history of the European policy of Russia in as summary a way as possible. Next it analyses the two principal ideas which have been influencing this policy. Then it deals with the international situation in Europe, the genesis, development and aims of the two hostile alliances which confront each other, and lastly with the Balkan Peninsula as the danger-spot of Europe.

A cursory glance at the history of the European policy of Russia will show that "as long as Russia pursued only well-defined aims which conformed to the real needs of the State and which were practicably attainable, this policy was entirely successful. All the tasks which the far-seeing genius of Peter the Great had sketched out for Russia and the realization of which he had begun himself, were carried to completion by his successors, Catherine the Great and Alexander the First. The shores not only of the Gulf of Finland and of the Baltic, but also of the Black Sea, became Russian, and with the territories peopled by Russians reconquered from Poland, and with the inclusion in the confines of the Empire of the Grand Duchy of Finland, the Kingdom of Poland and of Bessarabia, it would seem that the natural limit of Russia's expansion on the Continent of Europe had been reached, with the exception, perhaps, of a part of Galicia, with a population mainly of 'Little Russian' stock, which was made over to Austria at the Partition of Poland. One might even question whether it served the best interest of Russia to have included in the confines of the Empire the Kingdom of Poland. It could not be doubted, however, that any further territorial

acquisitions in Europe would have been for Russia merely a source of weakness and perhaps might have threatened the disruption of the overgrown Empire."

The disastrous Crimean War was brought on through the overweening ambition of the Emperor Nicholas I to play a leading part in the Near East. The dominant position which Russia had been occupying in Europe since the Congress of Vienna had encouraged such an ambition, but it also caused the formation of a coalition of England, France, Turkey and even Sardinia, against Russia, which inflicted on her a humiliating defeat.

After the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris on conditions humiliating to the dignity of Russia, our policy assumed for a time an attitude of reserve aptly characterized by the Chancellor Prince Gortschakoff's well-known saying: "Russia does not sulk, she collects herself." It was the beginning of the era of wide and beneficent reforms, such as the liberation of the serfs, the judiciary reform, the introduction of the self-governing "Zemstvos," and so forth, inaugurated by the Emperor Alexander II.

But in the seventies of last century began the preoccupation of our public opinion with the idea of the so-called tasks cut out for Russia in the Near East in connection partly with the "Great Slav Idea," partly with dreams of the conquest of Tsargrad (Constantinople) and the Straits.

The influence of this idea on the direction of our policy had, directly or indirectly, the following consequences:

"It led to the war with Turkey in 1877-78, the outcome of which, aside from the satisfaction derived from having accomplished an act of disinterested magnanimity in the liberation of Bulgaria from the Turkish yoke, did not give the Russian people anything but disillusionment as to the results achieved at the cost of so much blood and treasure. And this disillusionment, in its turn, created most favourable conditions for the development of the germs of revolution sown by the internal enemies of Russia;

"It was the cause of the attribution to Russia of far-reaching plans in relation to the conquest of the Straits and the bugbear of 'Pan-Slavism,' at the same time intensifying the general suspicion with which her policy has always

been regarded, which suspicion made itself felt in the general opposition she met with at the Congress of Berlin ;

“ It was the cause of the rupture of the friendly understanding with Germany and of the conclusion of the Austro-German alliance, and also of the disruption of the alliance of the Three Emperors, which had been the guarantee of the security of Russia’s western frontiers ;

“ It led to the conclusion of an alliance with France, which entangled us in a sphere of interests entirely alien to Russia, that is to say, of the interests of the French *revanche* for Sedan and of the reconquest of Alsace and Lorraine, and later on also of the Anglo-German antagonism ; in other words, of the conflicting interests which are bound to bring about the future general war in Europe ;

“ It was also indirectly the cause of our armed conflict with Japan, because it prevented us from giving due military support in time, with all the power of the State, to our Far Eastern policy, by which alone that conflict could have been prevented, and at the same time it caused us to keep our best troops inactive on our western frontier, whilst our reserve troops were being defeated in far-away Manchuria ;

“ Finally, it is this influence alone that could have induced us to raise quite gratuitously the question of the annexation by Austria of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to which we had already in principle assented at the Congress of Berlin,” a proceeding the negative result of which caused much bad blood in Russia and embittered our relations with the neighbouring Monarchy.

Considering how great, as we have seen, had been the influence of this idea of Russia’s supposed tasks in the Near East, it will not come amiss to examine the question how far these tasks could possibly correspond to the true interests of Russia and how far they are susceptible of practical realization.

Here we find ourselves at once in the presence of the so-called “ Great Slav Idea,” which in the opinion of our Slavophiles should serve as a guiding star for our foreign policy.

“ To begin with, it must be said that the Great Slav Idea originated in Moscow about the middle of last century in literary and not at all in political circles, and that not

one of the adepts of this idea has ever been able to bring it down from the clouds of dreamy sentimentalism into the region of clearly defined propositions which could serve as a basis for rational political calculations. Poetic notions of an ideal future when the 'Slav rivers will all come together in the Russian Sea,' as well as the contemporary lucubrations of our writers and orators of the Slavophile camp as regards the 'pacific cultural unification of Slavdom under the headship of Russia,' all float in the clouds of phantasy and are bare of any substantial foundation. Likewise all enterprises based on similar ideas, as for instance a United Slav Bank, exhibitions of Russian wares, Russian bookstores in Slav countries, either do not materialize at all or else are barely kept alive. It must also be said that all attempts at artificially creating a 'cultural unification' (whatever may be understood under this somewhat vague expression) between Russia and Slavdom, are doomed in advance, for the simple reason that such a 'unification,' however desirable it may appear from an ideal point of view, does not correspond to any concrete interest either of Russia or of Slavdom.

"As far as material culture is concerned, Russia stands in as little need of Slavdom as Slavdom does of Russia. Culture in the Slav countries of Austria stands by no means on a lower plane than in Russia, and in Bohemia, for instance, one might say on a higher one. In the Slav States of the Balkan Peninsula our commerce and industry could not compete with those of Austria and Germany otherwise than at a loss, because in Russia they are protected by an extremely high tariff, and the southern Slav countries will always find commerical relations with the neighbouring Austro-Hungarian Monarchy more convenient as well as more profitable than commercial relations with far-away Russia.

"As far as intellectual culture is concerned the Balkan Slavs (not to mention, of course, the Austrian Slavs) will unquestionably prefer, in spite of their apparent 'Germanophobia,' to go in search of it to its western—and preferably even German as the nearest—fountain-head.

"But even from a purely sentimental point of view there can be no question of a unification of Slavdom under the headship of Russia, as long as the Polish branch of the

race—that is to say, the most numerous and culturally most developed of all the non-Russian Slav nations—shows itself, as it has always done, irrevocably hostile not only to the Russian State, but to the Russian people. As regards the irresistible sympathies said to be drawing the Austrian Slavs towards Russia, it is sufficiently evident that their flirtations with her pursue a plainly selfish end; that is to say, to obtain from the Austrian Government the concessions they want by threatening that Government with the spectre of Pan-Slavism under the leadership of Russia. And the new-fangled Austro-Slavism, which has caused so much disillusionment of our Slavophiles, is certainly not treason to the ‘cause of United Slavdom,’ which exists only in the imagination of dreamy ideologues, but is based on a rational appreciation of their own material interests.

“But our flirtations with the Austrian Slavs by means of the Press and the oratorical exertions of some of our volunteer politicians have at last caused Austria to begin extremely undesirable, if not dangerous, flirtations with our own ‘Ukrainophiles,’ and other elements hostile to the Russian State and treasonably dreaming of the dismemberment of Russia.

“The sympathy of the Balkan Slavs for Russia is unquestionably more sincere. But this sympathy is not so much based on racial affinity as on sentiments of gratitude for great and disinterested benefactions conferred in the past and on the expectation of their continuance in the future. But even these sympathies have their limits. The author of this memorandum, when he was Minister at Belgrade, has had more than once to listen to expressions of soreness and disappointment from the lips of Pan-Serbian patriots on the subject of the preference shown by Russia at the Berlin Congress for Bulgarian interests, and of the sacrifice of Serbian interests in favour of Austria. I have had to explain that the war for the liberation of Bulgaria could not have been undertaken by us if we had not in advance secured the neutrality of Austria by consenting to the occupation by her of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and furthermore that it was only thanks to our victory in this war that Serbia herself was enabled to throw off the suzerainty of Turkey, whose vassal she had been, and that therefore

we did not deserve such reproaches. And even Bulgaria, which had just been liberated by us at the cost of rivers of the Russian people's blood and treasure, did not hesitate to oppose most energetically our attempts to exploit our newly acquired influence for some purpose of which we ourselves did not have any clear conception, and to seek the support of our political adversaries. It would, however, have been unjust to consider this to have been a demonstration of ingratitude on the part of a people who undoubtedly highly prized the benefaction conferred on her by Russia. They merely showed themselves possessed of the sound political instinct which placed the safeguarding of the true independence of the newly created State above sentimental considerations.

"Such was the true nature of our relations with the world of Slavdom as it appeared to every unprejudiced observer.

"Our society has always been too much inclined to attach to the element of racial affinity an exaggerated importance, which, as history amply demonstrates, it has never had nor ever can have in international politics. It is to this tendency, and likewise to the inveterate habit of our society to mix up the domain of sympathies and antipathies with that of politics, that must be attributed the hypnotic influence which the Great Slav Idea has exercised over the public mind, reflected in the vacillating and sometimes contradictory policies pursued by our diplomacy in the Near East."

An analysis of these policies and their effect on the general international situation in Europe I shall have to reserve for the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXXI

Pan-Slavism—Austrian Slavs—Constantinople and the Straits—British apprehensions—Folly of Russian ambitions—Importance of neutralizing the Straits—Russia's real mission—Rivalry of the Great Powers—Fate of my memorandum—German influence.

I HAVE endeavoured, following the lines of my memorandum to the Emperor, to demonstrate the unreality of the so-called "Great Slav Idea," *alias* "Pan-Slavism," as a possible factor in practical politics, and consequently the inadvisability of adopting it as a guiding star in the conduct of Russia's foreign policy. I shall now have to explain why it was that this idea, inasmuch as it influenced the policy of our Government, or even merely the attitude of our diplomatic or consular agents who frequently acted without authority in reliance on the unfailing support of the Slavophile Press, had become a stumbling-block on the road to a friendly understanding with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and a constant source of mutual irritation.

In order to understand the situation, it is necessary to remember that of the three principal nationalities composing the population of the Monarchy the Slavs were numerically the strongest element ; next came the Germans, and last the Hungarians or Magyars. Politically, however, the Germans as the dominant nationality occupied the first place ; next came the Magyars, and last the Slavs. Although since 1867 Hungary had become a semi-independent kingdom united to Austria only in the person of the monarch, the influence of the Magyars on the policy of the dualistic Monarchy was predominant because the Austrian Government in its domestic policy had adopted the system of relying on Hungarian support as a counterpoise to the Slav element, which in the Austrian half of the Monarchy was numerically in a considerable majority,

but which it was thought necessary to keep down politically. This policy, on the face of it unreasonable and, as events have shown, fatal in its consequences, was based, however, on two considerations, which in the eyes of its advocates among Austrian statesmen were not unnaturally held to be extremely weighty ones :

First, it responded to the strongly developed nationalistic feeling of the German-Austrian population used to age-long predominance and reluctant to renounce it in favour of the Slav element. The second consideration was a more complicated and, in the eyes of Austrian statesmen probably, a more important one. It was connected with the situation in the Balkan Peninsula and with the policy Russia was pursuing or was supposed to pursue in regard to the Balkan States of Slav nationality.

In a previous chapter relating to the time when I was Minister to Serbia I have referred to the curious effect produced on the policies of the Slav States of the Balkan Peninsula by the rival influences of Russia and Austria-Hungary. Thus Bulgaria would seek the support of the former against the latter, and Serbia the support of Russia against Austria-Hungary, and vice versa as circumstances might require ; the result being that the Vienna Government would consider one or the other of the Balkan Slav States as potentially most dangerous outposts of Russia against Austria-Hungary, the more so as the Southern Slavs would naturally be in full sympathy with the Slav populations of the Monarchy and would always be willing as well as able to foment among them discontent and a rebellious spirit.

On the other hand, Russia's policy—as far as our Government could be said to have had any well-defined and consistent policy—in the Balkan Peninsula was supposed to pursue a double aim : first, to prevent the spread of Austro-Hungarian influence in the Slav States, or, as Pan-Slavistic doctrine would have it, to protect these States from the pressure of Germanism in the shape of Austria and to foil her supposed aim of gaining an outlet to the Ægean Sea at Salonika ; and, secondly, to secure in the rear of Austria-Hungary an ally who might prove of use in case of war with the Monarchy.

This policy, inasmuch as it was inspiring the activity of our diplomacy in the Near East, was evidently moving in a vicious circle. We were to antagonize Austria-Hungary's policy in the Balkan Peninsula in the hope of thereby securing an ally against her in case of war, whereas this very antagonism was in reality the only cause that could or was at all likely to lead to an armed conflict with the Dual Monarchy.

Treating this subject in the above-mentioned memorandum, I wrote: "If this policy is inspired less by concern for the interests of Russia than by altruistic considerations regarding the interests of the Slavs of the Balkan Peninsula, the adherents of this policy are losing sight of the fact that the unfortunate population of Macedonia, already liberated at the cost of Russian blood and treasure, was replaced under the yoke of Turkey by the Berlin Congress solely because the dread of the spectre of 'Pan-Slavism' in connection with the far-reaching plans attributed to Russia on the basis of the 'Great Slav Idea' had arraigned against us not only Austria, but also the other Great Powers of Europe."

Thus, the unfortunate Macedonian Slavs had become the innocent victims of Austro-Russian antagonism, born of a policy dear to the hearts of our Slavophiles. But this antagonism had still more fatal results. It had created a situation pregnant with the most serious consequences, not for Russia only, but for the world, inasmuch as in case of trouble occurring in the Balkans, the possibility of the intervention of Austria-Hungary as the Power most nearly interested in Balkan affairs would always have to be reckoned with, and consequently the likelihood of Russia, unless guided by a policy of reason and competent statesmanship, becoming involved in a conflict which would automatically lead to a general war in Europe owing to the play of existing alliances.

If however, we could bring ourselves to renounce the fetish of the "Great Slav Idea," the question of our relations with the Dual Monarchy would present itself in quite another light. From the point of view of the security of our Western frontier, these relations were of no less importance than those with our other neighbour, Germany, and

the maintenance of friendly relations with both, as they had existed for a century and a half, should have been the first duty of Russian statesmanship. Russia was certainly not coveting any territorial acquisitions at the expense of Austria-Hungary, nor could the latter Power be suspected of any covetousness in regard to Russian possessions. The Austrian flirtations with our Ukrainophiles, barring some encouragement of their disloyalty to Russia, were not of any more practical importance than our flirtations with Austria's Slav subjects and our academic encouragements of their potential disloyalty to the Austrian Crown. Both Powers would certainly have acted wisely if they had put a damper on the exertions of their nationalistic agitators. But there existed no rational ground whatever for us to look askance at Austria's efforts to expand her political influence, after having been ousted from Germany, in the direction of Southern Slavdom.

It was high time for us to realize that Russia was not the only great Slav Power in the world, that Austria was another—no more, indeed, exclusively Slav than Russia herself, but since the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, about two-thirds Slav, and that the more Slav countries she could succeed in bringing within her sphere of interest, the greater and the more powerful would become the Slav element, and consequently the influence of Slavdom in the Monarchy. The incongruity, therefore, of our manifesting in the supposed interest of the "Great Slav Idea" any jealousy of our neighbour on account of his annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of his tendency to seek expansion of his influence southwards, would seem to be evident. In short, there was no rational ground whatever for supposing that two great Slav Powers could not exist side by side and live in peace and amity without attempting to encroach upon one another's domains or spheres of influence.

Moreover, such a consummation would have had the great merit of having laid for ever the ghost of Pan-Slavism under the headship of Russia, which for so long has been held to be a grave menace to the rest of Europe, although it has only been kept alive by the empty vapourings of our Slavophile Press, noisy agitations of our Slav Benevolent Societies, and more or less insubordinate activities of our

popularity-seeking diplomats and consuls in Slav countries. Pan-Slavism under the headship of Russia never could have become a reality for the simple reason that Slavdom, divided itself against itself by more than one deadly feud, was united only in its reluctance to submit to the supremacy, let alone domination, of Russia in any shape or form. Of this we had an enlightening experience when we tried our domineering policies on the Bulgarians we had just liberated from the Turkish yoke.

Having thus exposed in my memorandum the unwisdom of suffering our policy to be guided by popular conceptions of the "Great Slav Idea," I proceeded to examine the other so-called historic task Russia was supposed to have had cut out for her by her obvious destiny as well as by the unanimous traditional longing of the Russian people—the acquisition of Constantinople (Tsargrad) and the Straits. I first of all pointed out that all the vague and irresponsible talk so popular in our society, from the highest circles down to the lowest, about this so-called historic task of Russia, had been the cause of similar actual intentions of conquest being very generally attributed to our Government in spite of repeated denials and assurances to the contrary to which neither friend nor foe seemed to give any credence. At the same time inveterate and, it must be confessed, not quite groundless suspicions in this regard had given rise in England in the public mind and even in the councils of statesmen to natural but entirely groundless apprehensions lest the possession by Russia of Constantinople and the Straits might constitute a serious menace to England's communications with India and to the safety of her Indian Empire. The result, however, of all this had been a state of latent hostility which for more than half a century had profoundly affected the relations between the two great Empires to the lasting advantage of neither of them.

This supposedly "historic" task of our policy in the Near East did not by any means, as I pointed out in my memorandum, deserve this qualification, "unless we were to accept as a reason therefor the legendary raid on Constantinople undertaken by Oleg, Prince of Kiev, in the beginning of the tenth century. Neither Peter the Great nor Catherine the Great ever pursued a similar chimera.

They set themselves only such tasks as could be practically fulfilled, and accomplished them, covering Russia's arms with undying glory. Catherine the Great never as much as dreamed of the conquest of Constantinople—her imagination was concerned merely with the restoration of the Byzantine Empire under the sceptre of a Russian Grand Duke—the celebrated so-called 'Greek Project.' "

"As regards the question of the Straits"—to quote from the aforesaid memorandum—"it is high time to abandon the idea that they represent the key to our house which we should put into our pocket. This is one of those phrases which convey no precise meaning, but, being thoughtlessly repeated by millions of people, end by acquiring a hypnotic influence over people's minds." In reality these Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles can just as little be considered to represent the key to our house as could the strait known as the Sound (Oresund) giving access to the Baltic Sea from the North Sea or German Ocean. Moreover, in the Black Sea we still hold the superiority of naval forces as against Turkey, whereas in the Baltic it has already, and, to all appearances, definitely, passed into the hands of a neighbouring Power whose Navy ranks as second only to that of Great Britain.

The navigation of the Straits in time of peace—that is to say in normal times—being free to merchantmen, is closed only to naval vessels of all Powers save Turkey, under the treaties of 1841 and 1856. This latter stipulation, depriving our Navy of the right of free egress from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean and free ingress from the Mediterranean into the Black Sea, would seem, indeed, to constitute a serious disadvantage if we were in a position to consider our Black Sea ports as a naval base for a considerable fleet destined to operate beyond the limits of that Sea.

Such an ambition, however, it would be folly for us to entertain, for the simple reason that in case of a war with a maritime Power the Dardanelles, whether in our possession or not, could always be blockaded and closed to us by a superior naval force of the enemy. All that we really needed in the Black Sea was a fleet sufficiently strong to

cope with any naval force Turkey could possibly be able to put to sea against us. To go beyond that on the plea that, the Straits not being in our possession and therefore open—with the consent of Turkey—to the passage of an enemy fleet, we needed a strong naval force in the Black Sea for defensive purposes, would, in the first place, be neglecting what a recent writer defined as “the general rule that lesser navies are but concentrated national wealth and power in bundles convenient for destruction,” a rule the wisdom of which our own experience in the Crimean and Japanese Wars should have taught us to respect, and furthermore would be objectless, considering that under modern conditions coast defence can be best assured from the shore and the landing of considerable forces prevented or repulsed with disastrous effect to the invader.

“It stands to reason, therefore, that the whole question of the freedom of the Straits is for us more a matter of sentiment than of any practical importance. Besides, we may rest assured that Great Britain would never consent to a modification to suit our wishes of the status of the Straits as established by the treaties.”

(I must observe here that this was written in the summer of 1912; that is to say, three years before Great Britain and France had agreed to the acquisition by Russia of Constantinople, the Western Coast of the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmora, the Dardanelles, Southern Thrace as far as the Enos-Midia line, the coast of Asia Minor between the Bosphorus and the River Sakaria, and a point on the Gulf of Ismia to be defined later, the islands in the Sea of Marmora and the islands of Imbros and Tenedos—an agreement which only simple-minded incompetence could have taken for anything else but an empty promise given in order to enable Russian diplomacy to parade before the Russian people at least a semblance of justification for having brought upon Russia the catastrophe of this war, and easy enough to give because the actual realization of any such combination must have appeared more than doubtful. The value they attached to this justification the Russian people have demonstrated with sufficient clearness by their revolt against the continuation of the war, which was the true underlying meaning of the Russian Revolu-

tion, in spite of all endeavours to obscure this plain truth put forward by war propaganda.)

The taking permanent possession by us of the Straits and surrounding territories would necessarily involve the final liquidation of the inheritance of the "Sick Man of Europe," which would be opposed by all those laying claim to parts of his estate. Of course the military authorities alone would be competent to pronounce judgment on the question whether it would be at all possible from a strategical point of view to take and to retain permanent possession of these Straits, and, if possible, at what cost to the State and to the nation. But this pseudo-patriotic talk about the necessity for us of taking possession of the Straits was indulged in by thousands of people who are either unable or unwilling to study closely the question whether this supposedly most important task of our foreign policy was really susceptible of accomplishment and what would be the consequences for Russia of the realization, if such were possible, of their patriotic dreams.

There is, however, one really most important interest of Russia—and, for the matter of that, not alone of Russia but of all countries trading in the Black Sea—connected with this question of the Straits, and that is that they should at all times, whether in peace or in war, be free and open to merchant shipping of all nations—a point that could be secured only by their neutralization on the same lines as the neutralization of the Suez Canal, as an international waterway of prime importance, under the joint guarantee of all the Great Powers. Only such a guarantee assuring the safety of its capital could possibly induce the Porte to renounce its unquestionable right to close the Straits in self-defence, as she quite recently had been compelled to close them for a short time in view of a demonstration made by the Italian fleet during the Turko-Italian War and undertaken, perhaps, not without some hope of thereby provoking the intervention in the conflict of Russia as the Power most seriously and directly affected by the closing of the Dardanelles to navigation.

Having dealt at length with the question of the—in my opinion—dangerous character of the influence on our European policy of the "Great Slav Idea" and of the

dreams of our would-be conquerors of Constantinople and the Straits, and having pointed out another objectionable feature of this influence, namely, that it distracted our attention from the only real mission cut out for Russia by destiny—the all-important cultural mission in connection with our Siberian Empire and our dominions in Central Asia, I next sought in my memorandum an answer to the query: In what, then, consisted really the task we had to accomplish in the Near East?

The only possible answer to this query was bound to be that the task we would have to set ourselves could only be determined, not by any fantastic conceptions of the so-called Great Slav cause, but by the real interests of Russia as far as they were involved in Balkan affairs. These interests, in view of the manifestly impending crisis—this was written in the summer of 1912—demanded, first, that the work of the liberation of the Balkan populations from the Turkish yoke, as far as it had already been accomplished at the cost of so much Russian blood and treasure, should not be undone but should this time be carried through to the end; and lastly, that the Balkan Peninsula should cease to be a storm centre, periodically disturbing the tranquillity of Europe and for us a perennial menace of complications, capable of bringing us into an armed conflict with Austria and consequently of involving us in a general European war.

It is evident that such a settlement of Balkan affairs could never be reached by agreements about the maintenance of the *status quo* and the sovereignty of the Sultan, considering that it was this very *status quo* that was the source of all the trouble and that all the Balkan States had already unitedly determined not to tolerate it any longer, nor to sacrifice any longer their vital interests to a principle established by the Great Powers mainly for the purpose of covering up the rivalries which divided them.

The impending serious crisis in Balkan affairs acquired a character particularly dangerous not only for Russia but for all Europe in consequence of the existing system of alliances by which the Great Powers were divided into two camps in principle—whatever may be affirmed to the contrary—hostile one to another. There existed three motives

for such hostility, two of them, however, being entirely alien to Russia ; they were :

First, and most important of all because ineradicable, the Franco-German antagonism in connection with the question of Alsace-Lorraine and of revenge for the French defeat in 1870-71.

Second, the Anglo-German antagonism, born of commercial and industrial competition and of rivalry in ever-growing naval armaments—that is to say, of causes quite susceptible of peaceful adjustment.

In neither of these sources of hostility could Russia have had any legitimate concern whatever.

And last, but not least, the Austro-Russian antagonism, growing out of our fancied right of interference in the affairs of the Slav States of the Balkan Peninsula on the basis of the "Great Slav Idea," involving our fancied duty of protecting them from Austrian influence.

"The removal of this last cause of international hostility was entirely within our power. In case of our failure to remove it we might expect with certainty that out of the impending Balkan crisis would grow the sanguinary winding up of the European drama, in which we would unavoidably be involved by the inexorable logic of events, in spite of all our love of peace.

"The believers in the saving virtue of the existing system of alliances held that the equilibrium of forces which it had established was the best guarantee of European peace. Leaving aside the question of the greater or lesser sincerity of the believers in this doctrine, it remained to verify its applicability to the then existing situation in Europe by the light of the historic developments of the last forty years.

"During the first two decades after the Franco-Prussian War nothing threatened the peace of Europe, neither on the part of Germany nor on the part of France. The incident of 1875 in connection with the plan of a new invasion of France, whether justly or gratuitously attributed to the German General Staff, but in any case abandoned before maturity, had been skilfully exploited as a means of sowing discord between Russia and Germany, had, indeed, led to a marked coolness between the two Chancellors, Gortscha-

koff and Bismarck, but had not otherwise affected the prevailing peaceful disposition of all Europe.

"It was the epoch when Germany, first alone, then in alliance with Austria-Hungary, and finally with Italy as well, disposed of a superiority of forces sufficient to relegate any idea of revenge on the part of France to the domain of unattainable desiderata, of which—as Gambetta was supposed to have said—one might always think but should never speak.

"But then this idea of revenge experienced a revival with the entry of France into an alliance with Russia, having, indeed, furnished the principal motive for its conclusion. At the same time the conflict of interests between the two countries assumed a more pronounced character. Germany considered her chief and vital interest to lie in the maintenance of the integrity of the German Empire, including in its confines Alsace and Lorraine, reconquered from France, who, under Louis XIV, had annexed these originally German provinces in the seventeenth century. France on her part refused to recognize the Treaty of Frankfort as having definitively fixed the frontier between the two countries, and considered the question of revenge and of the reconquest of the lost provinces as a national ideal which the French nation could not renounce without loss of self-respect. There we had a fundamental conflict whose solution was only possible in two ways: either by the renunciation by one or the other side of its national ideal—which, of course, was not to be thought of, neither side showing any inclination in such a direction, nor even towards some possible compromise—or else by the arbitrament of war.

"But this conflict—the real, basic cause of the perturbed state of Europe—could have remained a chronic one without threatening a proximate clash of arms as long as, owing to the manifest superiority of the forces of one of the sides, a resort to the risk of war was bound to appear unnecessary to the stronger side and undesirable to the weaker. It was, therefore, the establishment of an equilibrium of forces that alone could create the potentiality of a war between the two. The only possible logical deduction from these premises would necessarily be that the equi-

brium of forces, established by the conclusion of the Franco-Russian Alliance, far from being a safeguard against the danger of its being broken, was the real and standing menace to the world's peace.

“ However, even the believers in the doctrine of the equilibrium of forces could not but realize that an equilibrium based on two hostile alliances, one of which, so to speak, encircles the other on two sides and therefore represents a standing menace to the latter, could at best serve as a guarantee of peace only so long as the encircled party had not made up its mind to seek an issue from such a situation at the cost of a war, if need be even on two fronts.

“ The adherents of the political system which had created this unquestionably perilous situation saw its justification in the supposed necessity for Russia to oppose the tendency to establish her hegemony in Europe which was attributed to Germany. Whatever may be understood by the sufficiently indefinite term ‘hegemony,’ such a hegemony as that established by the great Napoleon over all Europe except Russia and Great Britain—nowadays practically impossible—could hardly have been meant by that term: the necessity of opposing it could evidently arise for Russia only in case such hegemony threatened any of her vital interests.

“ No definite explanation has ever been forthcoming as to what particular interests of Russia, and in what way, could have been threatened by such a hegemony of Germany, if it had been possible to establish it in reality. Russia has no real interests to safeguard in Europe beyond the defence of the integrity of her territory, which no one shows the least disposition to attack. Russia has no call to pledge the lives of her sons and to imperil her prosperity for the defence of the interests or the satisfaction of the grievances of any other Power.

“ Russia, occupying the greater part of the European Continent, may be assimilated to a continent by itself, standing between Europe and Asia, self-contained and self-sufficient, like the United States. Russia's only cultural mission is confined to Asia. Her paramount interest is peace with all the world, and the only rational policy for her to pursue must be freedom from entangling alliances of

any kind and abstention from participation in any of the rivalries and conflicting policies of the Powers of Central and Western Europe.

"The most superficial observer and the veriest tyro in diplomacy could not have helped noticing the efforts being made by our policy to keep the balance even between France, our ally, and Germany, our potential enemy—a policy which could not possibly satisfy either the one or the other and was bound to deprive us of the confidence of both."

For reasons already explained I refrained from winding up my memorandum with any conclusions beyond pointing to the alarming character of the events which were then taking place in the Balkan Peninsula and to the failure of European diplomacy to have gauged aright the condition of things there and the psychology of the Balkan peoples, besides expressing at the same time some doubt as to the efficacy of the means by which that same diplomacy expected to localize the war and to prevent collisions between the Great Powers in reliance on the miraculous power of the system of alliances, in spite of its containing in itself the germs of such collisions unavoidable in the more or less remote future.

Having finished in Paris my work on this memorandum some time in October, 1912, I sent it to St. Petersburg and, through the good offices of a kind friend, had a type-written copy of it prepared and handed to the Prime Minister, Mr. Kokovtseff, with the request to submit it to the Emperor. In the following month of December I went to St. Petersburg to resume my duties as Member of the Council of the Empire, and, being anxious to learn the fate of my memorandum, called at once upon the Prime Minister. He told me that he had taken it to Spala, a shooting-box in Poland, where the Emperor was in temporary residence at the time, and had handed it to His Majesty, that the Emperor had looked at the rather bulky document and had asked to be told in a few words the substance of its contents, and that he, Mr. Kokovtseff, had explained that the fundamental idea of the memorandum concerned the necessity for Russia to come to some agreement with Austria. Thereupon the Emperor had expressed

his entire concurrence in this idea, but had remarked that the difficulty in the way of reaching such an agreement was that he was unable to find out what it was exactly that Austria wanted.

The only inference I could draw from what Mr. Kokovtseff had imparted to me of his conversation with the Emperor was that neither the Sovereign himself nor the Chief of his Government thought it worth his while to go any deeper into the matter, which I considered to be one of supreme importance and to which I had hoped to draw their most serious attention. This, of course, was sufficiently discouraging, and would have been more so had I not been used to meeting with nothing but supercilious indifference at the hands of the men in power whenever I had attempted to express to any one of them my humble opinion on matters of public policy. The only one of all our statesmen in power who ever had condescended to listen to what I had to say had been the late Prince Lobanoff, when, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, he had appointed me to the post of Minister to Serbia, and then perhaps mainly because my ideas on the subject of our Balkan policy entirely coincided with his own views.

Altogether my experience with our various Governments, Imperial as well as "provisional," after the Revolution, and lastly "coalition" under Kerensky, has convinced me of the truth of what a distinguished English writer, discussing in his own review the question "Could the war have been prevented?" has to say in regard to conditions in Germany, and what is quite as applicable to our own ruling powers of all parties, namely:

"That infallibility is the besetting sin of men in authority, who, even when surrounded by the ruins they created, have no misgivings concerning their own rôle, no twinges of remorse for the havoc they have wrought and the limitless suffering their insane ambitions and stupendous incapacity have inflicted, not merely on their own people and their own generation, but on countless generations that are unborn."

But I feel bound to mention here an exception to the rule. It so happened that at some official function I met a member of the Cabinet, head of a less conspicuous but

in its special sphere most efficient department of the Government, who engaged me in a conversation on some trivial subject of social gossip and, abruptly dropping this subject, asked me what I thought of the political situation in Europe. I told him that I looked upon it as extremely serious, and was just going to explain as briefly as circumstances would permit some of the reasons why I took such a pessimistic view of the situation, when dinner was announced and I could only offer to let him see, if it interested him, something which I had written on the subject and had had submitted to the Emperor. My offer was eagerly accepted, and the following morning I sent him the manuscript of my secret memorandum. The Minister returned it to me a couple of days later with a little note in which he expressed his concurrence with my views on all essential points, reserving a few matters of detail for further discussion with me.

That was the only relation I ever had with the Government in regard to a matter of life or death for our country. I prefer not to mention the name of that only member of the Government who had shown some serious interest in this matter, as he may have escaped from Bolshevik Russia and may, on account of my having marked him as a sharer of my views, experience some difficulty in obtaining the requisite *visés* for visiting countries where persons of my way of looking upon the vital interests of Russia are not welcome. He had, besides, under our governmental regime, no influence whatever in matters of foreign policy.

I have frequently pointed out the fundamental defect of the organization of our Government as it was before the constitutional reform of 1905, namely, the absence of unity, inasmuch as each separate department of the Government was functioning quite independently of all the others under the immediate direction of the Sovereign. The constitutional reform of 1905, although it created a simulacrum of a "Cabinet" under the headship of a Prime Minister, had left things very much in the same condition, the more so as by the new organic laws all foreign, military and naval affairs were specially reserved as the exclusive domain of the Sovereign.

In this last respect, therefore, even by the constitu-

tional reform nothing was changed in the old order of things. At the time when a momentous and decisive crisis was evidently approaching, this condition was one which no patriot could contemplate otherwise than with the most sinister misgivings, especially as the most important department of the Government was in the hands of a man who, however honourable as a private individual, was not, either by capacity or by experience, qualified, any more than the Sovereign himself, to direct at a critical time the foreign policy of a great Empire. Thus it was to come about that the ultimate decision which was to sound the death-knell of Russia depended on the self-sufficient incompetence of a Minister, the vacillating weakness of his master, and their unthinking impulses.

Determined to leave no stone unturned in endeavouring to call the attention of the powers that were to the rocks ahead on the perilous course the ship of State was steering, I had my memorandum printed at the Government printing office as a secret document, in fifty numbered copies, forty-seven of which I distributed confidentially among the members of the Government, past and present, the highest dignitaries of the Empire, and some political personages of the Council and of the Duma. I took steps, through a channel I held to be entirely reliable, to have one copy presented to the Emperor and kept one for myself, plus one in reserve for use in an eventuality to which I shall refer later on. I did not, of course, succeed in eliciting any expressions of opinion from any member of the Government, save the one mentioned above, but from almost all the other recipients of my memorandum I received verbal assurances of concurrence in my views. Not one, however, was either willing or able to give me any support in trying to press this supremely important matter on the serious attention of the Sovereign and the Government.

This apparent indifference to the fate of the country, whose destiny was evidently being made the sport of interests with which the Russian people had no concern, finds its explanation partly in the fatalistic strain in the national character, partly in the total absence of that feeling of personal responsibility for the condition of public

affairs, to whose free development centuries of humble submissiveness to autocratic rule could never have given sufficient scope.

There was, however, another reason why any endeavour aiming at the avoidance of an expected and even hoped-for rupture with our Western neighbours could only meet with some discreet sympathy, but not with openly professed support. Here again I feel compelled to controvert one of the legends industriously spread by the "War Propaganda," by means of its usual stock in trade—*suppressio veri, suggestio falsi*—namely, the entirely groundless legend about the prevalence at the Russian Court and in Russian Government circles of "German" influence.

As regards this question of "influence," I must define, once for all, my own standpoint, from which I have never swerved, and which is: that for a great country to suffer itself to be treated, as Turkey used to be, as a battle ground for rival foreign influences is a shame and a disgrace, and that therefore, viewed from this purely Russian standpoint, "German influence," if it had had any real existence, would not have been one whit less degrading than that of the Entente, even though its obvious object would have coincided with the true interest of Russia, that of keeping out of a war in which she could have no legitimate end to gain by victory and would stand to lose everything in case of defeat.

As a matter of fact there existed no means by which such German influence could have made itself felt at the Russian Court, where a marked anti-German current had set in ever since the beginning of the reign of Alexander III. His consort, the Empress Marie Feodorovna, as a Danish princess, brought to Russia very pronounced anti-German feelings which the Emperor shared and which were, perhaps, aggravated through his hardly concealed antipathy toward the Emperor William II, the characteristics of whose personality were the very opposite of his own. These feelings were inherited by his son and successor, Nicholas II, whose consort, the late Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, although the daughter of a German prince, was also the daughter of an English princess and who certainly was more English than German in her feelings.

The Imperial couple, barring some very rare brilliant functions at the Winter Palace during the season, led the most retired family life. There really was no Court at all in the sense this expression is generally used. The few Court functionaries who through the duties of their offices were brought into daily contact with the Imperial family could hardly be considered to compose a "Court" in that sense. There was not one personage of mark among them, no one who could have exercised any influence on the policy of the State. The times were no more when, as in the eighteenth century, at the Court of Russia rival diplomacies—Anglo-Prussian on one side and Austro-French on the other—were contending against each other for the coveted prize: the legions of the despised "Moujik," good enough to be utilized as cannon fodder on the battle-fields of Europe, in their struggles for supremacy.

Nor had the influence which Entente diplomacy was exercising on our policy been acquired by any devious ways of Court intrigue. It was simply exploiting for its own purposes the naïve self-sufficiency of the human material in charge of our foreign affairs, and their failure to realize that the Russia of our days was still regarded by Western nations very much in the same light as the Russia of the eighteenth century, and that they were being flatteringly treated on a footing of equality as "statesmen," mainly in order to make better use of them as pawns in the game of European politics.

Not only had Entente diplomacy no occasion to counteract any adverse influence at Court or in the Government—their constant apprehensiveness lest such influences might make their appearance merely disclosed their consciousness of the fact that their policy was at bottom opposed to the true interests of Russia—but on the contrary, all the forces of public opinion were working in their favour and would have drowned the voice of anyone bold enough to utter an open warning against the grave peril to which the country was being exposed by the pursuit of such a policy, popular precisely because of its uncompromisingly anti-German character.

To account for the existence of such a strong anti-German current one must revert to the first year of the

reign of the Liberator, Alexander II, when Russian society, under the spell of that great epoch of reforms, first awoke to national self-consciousness. The new-born nationalism, however, took at first the form of a most violent anti-Polonism, provoked by the Polish insurrection of 1863 and fostered by the ultra-nationalistic Press, headed by the *Moscow Gazette* under the editorship of the famous Katkoff—a Press organ which in those days wielded an influence comparable only to that of the *London Times*, the *Thunderer* of the days of the Crimean War—who knew how to enflame the dormant patriotism of the nation when threatened with foreign intervention in the shape of collective diplomatic representations in favour of Poland, undertaken by all European Powers except Prussia and Austria.

The non-participation of Prussia in that diplomatic campaign against Russia, her particularly friendly and helpful attitude at the time of the Polish insurrection, her friendly neutrality in the Crimean War, when we had to fight a coalition headed by France and England, and Austria had taken up a threatening position on our flank—all this enlisted our sympathy on the side of Prussia in her war with Austria and later with France. The growth of the Slavophile movement, which led to the war with Turkey in 1877-8 for the liberation of Bulgaria, followed by the Congress of Berlin, and the bitterness caused by its deceptive results, which were generally attributed to the lukewarmness of Germany's support, were sufficient to damp the feelings of Russian society toward Germany. Moreover, during the second half of Alexander II's reign, when reaction had gained the upper hand, he himself being known as a warm and devoted friend of his uncle, the Emperor William I, much of the reactionary tendencies of the time was attributed by liberal opinion to German influence, just as in Germany, and with as little reason, Russian reactionary influence was supposed to have been paramount before the Revolution of 1848 and after its suppression.

Thus in both countries, in certain circles of the "Intelligentsia," feelings of animosity against each other's ruling classes began to develop. These feelings were intensified

by the growth of Slavophile or Pan-Slavistic tendencies in Russia, and on the other side of Pan-Germanism as the fruit of the unification of the German Empire and the victories of German arms.

Gradually the idea of the unavoidable character of the feud between Slavdom and Germanism began to gain ground in the popular mind, or rather, in the minds of the "Intelligentzia," the real people remaining entirely indifferent to similar ideas, which indeed were quite beyond their mental horizon. Meanwhile, however, militant nationalism had been adopted by the reaction evidently as a device of popularization of the regime with the masses—another demonstration of the non-comprehension by the ruling classes of the real mentality of the people.

At first this extreme nationalism was directed against the Poles as a natural consequence of the suppressed insurrection, and, where efforts of Russification proved unavailing, German penetration, curiously enough, was favoured as offering better guarantees of loyalty to the Government. At the same time efforts at Russification were inaugurated and with more or less consistency pursued against the German element in the Baltic Provinces, whose loyalty to the Government had never been questioned and had rendered it rather unpopular in Liberal circles on this very account.

The ground for the growth of anti-Germanism was therefore well prepared, inasmuch as it had been adopted, except in Poland, as a political weapon both by the bureaucracy and by the opposition. And when the *rapprochement* with republican France took place it was enthusiastically hailed by the "Intelligentzia" as a manifestation of anti-Germanism no less than as a promise of things to come, of which it was at last permissible to dream in the expectation of realization in the future. Although the initiative had come beyond question from above, it was also hailed as a popular victory, as a *rapprochement* effected by two peoples above the heads of their rulers.

Across the frontier, to the development of anti-German feelings with us had corresponded a similar tendency of hostility to Russia, mainly confined, as in Russia, to certain

circles of the "Intelligenzia." In both countries, however, these feelings and their growing intensity were obviously not unwelcome to the military element, always preoccupied with the idea of possible wars. It would, however, be impossible to exaggerate the fatal importance which this latent Russo-German antagonism, upon reaching an acute stage, acquired in bringing about the actual outbreak of the war; nor would it be just to attempt to minimize the monstrously heavy responsibility in this respect resting on the shoulders of the immediately guilty parties on both sides; I say emphatically "on both sides," and not by any means on one side alone, as will be shown later on.

The *rapprochement* with France took place by an exchange of visits by the respective fleets to Kronstadt and Toulon, and was sealed by an exchange of ministerial declarations, in August 1891, formulating the following two points:

I. In order to define and consecrate the *entente cordiale* which unites them, and desirous of contributing by a common agreement to the maintenance of the peace which forms the object of their sincerest wishes, the two Governments declare that they will concert upon every question of a nature to bring the general peace into question.

II. For the case where this peace should be in fact endangered, especially if one of the two parties should be menaced by an aggression, the two parties agree to reach an understanding on the measures which the two Governments would have immediately and simultaneously to adopt upon the occurrence of this eventuality.

These declarations were completed by the conclusion in August 1892 of a military convention signed by General Obrucheff, Chief of the Russian General Staff and General of Division De Boisdeffre, of the French General Staff—the text of which, subsequently slightly amended in immaterial points, ran as follows:

I. If France is attacked by Germany, or by Italy supported by Germany, Russia will employ all her available forces to fight Germany.

If Russia is attacked by Germany, or by Austria supported by Germany, France will employ all her available forces to fight Germany.

II. In the event of the forces of the Triple Alliance, or of one of the Powers composing it, being mobilized, France and Russia, at the first news of the event and without any preliminary arrangement being necessary, shall mobilize immediately and simultaneously the whole of their forces and move them as near as possible to their frontiers.

III. The available forces to be employed against Germany shall be, on the side of France 1,200,000 to 1,300,000; on the side of Russia, 700,000 or 800,000 men.

These forces shall engage to the full, with all speed, in order that Germany may have to fight on the east and west at once.

IV. The General Staffs of the armies of the two countries will confer at all times to prepare and facilitate the execution of the measures contemplated.

They will communicate to each other during the time of peace all information relative to the armies of the Triple Alliance which is or will be known to them. Ways and means of corresponding in times of war will be studied and arranged in advance.

V. France and Russia will not conclude peace separately.

VI. The present convention shall have the same duration as the Triple Alliance.

VII. All the clauses enumerated above shall be kept rigorously secret.

This military convention was approved and declared to be adopted by an exchange of notes between Mr. de Giers, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, and Mr. de Montebello, Ambassador of France, in December 1893.

Furthermore, on July 28 (August 9), 1899, an exchange of notes between Count Mouravieff, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, and Mr. Delcassé, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the French Republic, took place, establishing the following :

The Imperial Government of Russia and the Government of the French Republic, always solicitous for the maintenance of the general peace and of equilibrium among European forces,

Confirm the diplomatic arrangement formulated in the letter of August 9/21, 1891, of Mr. de Giers, that of August 15/27, 1891, to Baron Mohrenheim, and the letter in reply of Mr. Ribot, likewise bearing the date of August 15/27, 1891.

They have decided that the project of military convention, which is the complement thereof and which is mentioned in the letter of Mr. de Giers of December 15/27, 1893, and that of Count Mouravieff of December 23rd/January 4th, 1894, will remain in force as long as the diplomatic agreement concluded for safeguarding the common and permanent interests of the two countries.

The most absolute secrecy as to the tenor and even as to the existence of the said arrangements must be scrupulously observed on both sides.

Beyond these secret papers published by the "World's Peace Foundation," including two conventions concluded between the Russian and French naval departments concerning exchanges of information, I have not been able to

discover any secret document embodying a formal treaty of alliance between Russia and France. I note, however, that Earl Loreburn, in his admirable book *How the War Came*, on page 64, writes: "Whatever the motive, in 1896 Russia contracted a *Treaty of Alliance* with France," and then on page 65 he states that "this *Franco-Russian Treaty of 1896 is one of the most important in all history*." Maybe the author here meant to refer to the fact that it was, I think, in the summer of 1896 that the Emperor Nicholas, on a visit to the French flagship at Kronstadt, pronounced for the first time the word "alliance" in an official toast to the French Republic, which may have been, so to speak, an official acknowledgment of an alliance already existing or supposed to exist on the basis of the above-quoted documents. However that may be, in commenting on the significance of this treaty of alliance Earl Loreburn makes a series of exceedingly pertinent remarks, the truth of which may not be questioned.

He says: "Thenceforth the feud between German and Slav was linked up with the feud between German and French." This was indeed the real crux of the whole situation and rendered the outbreak of war between the three races, of whom two were definitely arraigned against the third, merely a question of time and opportunity, unless prevented by wise statesmanship, the tradition of which seems to be lost in this age of demagoguery, propaganda and hysteria. That such a conflict, once opened, would involve all the other Great Powers was a matter of certainty owing to the existing chain of alliances, for, as Earl Loreburn remarks, "they were like Alpine climbers who are roped to one another. If one stumbles fatally, all must perish. . . . To walk alone on the edge of a precipice is dangerous. To be fastened to a comrade who may stumble is still more dangerous."

In discussing in my memorandum the state of opinion in France regarding the Franco-Russian Alliance, I had stated that, so far as I could see, opinion was not as unanimous in its favour as was generally supposed, and in support of this contention I had quoted an article which had appeared in the *Echo de Paris*, one of the leading

Parisian newspapers, over the signature of a very distinguished member of the Chamber of Deputies. The basic idea of this article was the following: The Franco-Russian Treaty, in principle and in intention, is directed against Germany; but Russia has not the same reasons as France for hostility to Germany; she is, moreover, united to Germany by traditions of friendship dating back to more than a century and by family ties of the reigning dynasties. The relation of Russia to the Treaty, therefore, could not partake of the same character of intensity as that of France.

Having quoted this opinion of the author of the article in question, I recorded my impression that his evident consciousness of the one-sided and hollow unreality of the Alliance was shared by many earnest and thinking patriots in France, and that this consciousness was not absent even in the first days of the enthusiasm provoked by the festivities at Kronstadt and at Toulon, where the word "peace" was on all lips but all hearts flamed with the hope of revenge. The author of the article, however, tries to persuade himself that Russia, after all, is bound to entertain feelings of racial antagonism towards Germany, and that her closer approach to Germany would be impossible, because such a treason to "Slavism" would provoke in all the Slavic world a shout of indignation from the Adriatic to the Gulf of Finland.

As a counterfoil to this opinion I would quote another, expressed to me some time in the summer of 1913 by a very distinguished Frenchman, a retired diplomat and patriot but a believer in peace, in the following words: "I have never been able to comprehend why it was that Russia's statesmen have not been able to come to a friendly understanding with Germany, the desirability of which was so plainly indicated by the situation." To this I could only reply that it may have been for the reason that Russia found herself in the same quandary as Ireland, where, it is said, there are no snakes.

I have often asked myself how it was that the Emperor Alexander III, who had had the wisdom to cut loose from the Alliance of the Three Emperors, who had viewed with hardly concealed satisfaction the refusal of Germany to renew Bismarck's famous treaty of "reassurance," and

who had as adviser so prudent a statesman as Mr. de Giers, could have consented to enter into another and far more dangerously entangling alliance.

The text of the secret dispatch of Mr. de Giers, addressed to our Ambassador at Paris on the 9/21 of August, 1891, formulating the two points of an *entente cordiale* with France, to which I have referred above, may perhaps solve this enigma. This is its opening sentence:

The situation created in Europe by the open renewal of the Triple Alliance and the more or less *probable adhesion by Great Britain to the objects which that alliance pursues*, caused, during the recent stay here of M. Laboulaye, between the former Ambassador of France and myself an exchange of ideas tending to define the attitude which in present junctures and in the presence of certain eventualities might seem best to our respective Governments, which, henceforth in complete league, are none the less sincerely desirous of surrounding the maintenance of peace with the most efficacious guarantees.

The apprehension of Great Britain's possible adhesion to the Triple Alliance, and the objects it pursued, would seem rather astonishing in the light of recent events. But one should not forget that in those days "perfidious Albion" was the bugbear of continental diplomacy and was considered our arch enemy. I mention this merely as a "curiosum" which I discovered in examining these recently published secret documents. I wonder whether the Emperor Alexander in his conscious strength realized that by entering into this Entente or Alliance, albeit secret, and in tying his hands, he was seriously weakening the splendid position his isolation had given him as the arbiter of the peace of the world and was leaving to his son and successor the heritage of a policy which his weaker hands might not be able to direct.

If any of my readers wish to go deeper into the question of the origin of the World War, I could only recommend to them the perusal of Earl Loreburn's remarkable book, *How the War Came*. It is the masterly summing up of a great judge whose lofty sense of impartiality and right is dealing even justice to all parties concerned. It will destroy many illusions created and fostered by the war propaganda on both sides. But it is addressed to the jury of posterity, whose verdict cannot be doubtful.

CHAPTER XXXII

The principle of nationalities—The Church—The influence of language—
Internationalism—Position in the Balkans—The London Conference—
Mr. Hartwig—Treaty of Bucharest—Finland—The Tsar and his letter—
Poland—Little Russia—Ukraina—My speech in the Upper House.

IN attempting to analyse the political motives which inspired the governing bodies and the passions and tendencies which swayed the minds of the ruling classes of the leading nations of Europe in the years preceding the world catastrophe I shall have to begin with a few reflections in regard to the two contending forces of the modern world of the white race—the principle of nationalities and the principle of internationalism—at present engaged in a struggle for supremacy the issue of which will determine the future destiny of mankind.

The principle of nationalities as a guiding principle of world politics and a source of armed conflicts between States is of very recent origin, as I have already endeavoured to show. The world of the Middle Ages, as it emerged from the chaotic condition subsequent to the downfall and ruin of the Roman Empire and the disappearance of the highly developed and refined civilization of the Græco-Roman world swamped by the tidal wave of barbarism, was a world unified under the all-powerful ægis of the victorious Christian Church. The power of the Church as exemplified by the penance imposed on the then most powerful monarch, Emperor Henry IV, when, after three days' profound humiliation and penitent wait at the gates of the Castle of Canossa, he was granted absolution by Pope Gregory VII, was supreme in all the Christian States of Europe.

The supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church, which had saved from total destruction what remained of the

ancient Latin civilization, brought in its train another and a most potent element of unity—the element of language. Latin, which had been the universal language of the ancient Roman world and which was also the language of the Church, became and remained for centuries the ecclesiastical, political and official language of Europe, so much so that in Hungary until the end of the eighteenth century it remained the language of the Court, the administration and the educated and privileged classes.

The unity of the Christian world of Western Europe was broken by the advent of the Reformation. The mediæval Church has been essentially an international super-State, and the character of the Protestant secession from it was largely determined by this fact. After the Reformation the division of the Churches corresponded roughly to the two principal racial and linguistic areas of Western Europe—the Latin and the Teutonic. But in the ensuing sanguinary religious and dynastic wars the principle of nationalities had no part, nor had the question of languages as yet acquired any importance as an element of discord between nationalities included in the same political entity. The supremacy of the five great cultural languages—English, French, German, Italian and Spanish—was given unquestioned and willing recognition by minor nationalities within the confines of their respective spheres. It never would occur to a Scotchman, a Welshman, an Irishman, or to any representative of the numerous nationalities settled in America, to resent using the English language in their official, business or social intercourse with their fellow-citizens. The same, of course, may be said of the Provençal, the Basque, the Breton and the German-Alsatian elements composing the population of France. Similarly, the coexistence on a footing of perfect equality of three of the principal cultural languages in Switzerland has never given rise to any discord or friction among the population of German, French and Italian nationality.

Not so, however, in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, where in the Austrian half the dominant State language, German, was confronted with three branches of the Slav language, Polish, Czecho-Slovak and Serbo-Croatian, neither of which could claim cultural equality with German; and

in Hungary the dominant State language, Magyar, could not lay claim to cultural superiority over the Slav and Roumanian languages spoken by Serbians and Moldo-Wallachian subjects of the Kingdom.

With the awakening in a militant form of national self-consciousness among minor nationalities in the second half of the last century this question of languages acquired a momentous importance. When language ceased to be a welcome and willingly accepted unifying element it was apt to become on one side an instrument of oppression, and on the other a palladium of nationality and a standard of revolt. It is easy to see what a powerful disruptive element this language question was bound to prove in a State composed of many different and mostly mutually antagonistic nationalities. In this respect Austria-Hungary presented, indeed, a strange anomaly among European States. But it was an anomaly that represented the growth of centuries of historical development and that had its justification in the common good of all the heterogeneous nationalities concerned, on whom it conferred the invaluable benefits, cultural, economic and political, derived from the advantage of being united under the shelter of a great and powerful State.

It was, therefore, the obvious interest of the populations themselves that was primarily concerned in the existence of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Its continued existence as a political entity was no less desirable in the interest of the family of European States, and it was this weighty consideration which caused that truly great French statesman, Talleyrand, to say that "If there had not been an Austria it would have been necessary to invent one." He would turn in his grave could he see the utter ruin and threatening chaos which has turned South-Eastern Europe into a bear-garden of warring nationalities.

The unintelligent handling of this language question by the Austro-Hungarian Government has evidently been the principal, if not the only serious cause of the discontent and even hatred of its subjects of Slav nationality; for it is difficult to understand in what other way oppression could possibly manifest itself in a modern civilized State

such as even its quondam enemies will concede Austria-Hungary to have been.

However, the potent influence of this disruptive tendency in the Austro-Hungarian body politic has powerfully contributed to the genesis and growth of that "feud between Slav and German" the linking of which with the "feud between German and French" Earl Loreburn rightly considers to have been brought about by the Franco-Russian Alliance, and which, therefore, has been the really determining element rendering likely an armed conflict between the leading nations of Europe.

In trying to account for the undeniable existence of these feuds one would naturally ask oneself whether there is something in the very nature of man, as a zoological specimen of the *genus homo sapiens*, which impels him to look upon his fellow-man as a natural enemy as soon as he belongs to a different family of the same race, or whether such feuds are the product of artificial, and consequently removable, conditions, dependent on the will of man. In the first case one would have to recognize the presence of a superior force, a biological law of nature, from the influence of which escape is as impossible as a refusal to submit to the law of gravitation, and therefore any hope of mankind ever freeing itself from the curse of war would have to be relegated to the domain of idle dreams. In the second case, one would have to inquire into the conditions favouring the genesis and growth of that psychology which finds expression in international feuds, and, on the other hand, to weigh the forces which counteract its influence.

As long as political power was concentrated in the hands of the few, there could be, between dynasties and States, feuds of varying complexion according to circumstances, as combinations of statecraft or objects of the ambition of rulers would necessitate. They might even assume the character of long-standing feuds, such as that between England and France, or France and Germany. But they were feuds between rulers and between States, not, however, strictly speaking, feuds between nationalities. They could assume the latter nature only since political power and influence had practically passed from the narrow

circles of Courts and aristocracies into the hands of the middle classes, without whose support no Government, however autocratic, could pursue an active foreign policy. It was the educated middle classes, the "Intelligentzia," who were the moulders of that public opinion on the support of which every Government had to rely. They had it in their power to impart to what had been feuds between States the character of truly national feuds, or to create such feuds where none had existed before, because they had command of the most powerful influence of modern times, by the printed word in book, periodical and daily Press, an influence most beneficent when used in the cause of reason and justice, and most dangerous when misused for the creation and promotion of national or race hatreds and animosities.

Such movements as Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism—whose baleful influence finally brought on the outbreak of the World War and the ruin of both the Empires of Russia and of Germany—originated in, and were fostered by, the middle-class "Intelligentzia" in both countries. They were exploited as powerful political weapons by ambitious politicians and militant general staffs. But the popular masses had no part in these movements, nor in the acutely hostile feelings they generated. Similarity of conditions and of outlook on life would tend to create between the toiling masses of all nations a bond of sympathy, just as in the highest circles of European society similarity of tastes and pursuits, the command and habitual use of English or French as a common language, constant intercourse in such centres of international high life as London, Paris, Rome or the Riviera, not to mention frequent intermarriages, had created a sort of freemasonry excluding the indulgence in national or race hatreds, which would be apt to be looked upon not merely as irrational but simply as "bad form."

To the passive resistance of these two elements situated at the extremities of the social scale will have to be added a very potent active element tending to neutralize the influence of militant psychology favouring international strife and animosity, and that is the influence of international trade and finance. Their network nowadays

embraces the whole globe and their prosperity is dependent on the solidity of the vast structure of credit, whose delicate fabric in its turn is closely linked up with the maintenance of the world's peace.

Nothing, therefore, could be more unfounded and incongruous than the accusation persistently hurled at international capital and finance by the Socialist parties of being mainly responsible for the origin and outbreak of what they are pleased to describe as the "capitalists' war." Nor can the growth of gigantic armaments works be justly held to have tended to bring about the World War. It is not the supply that creates the demand, but the demand that brings forth the supply. And the demand was not created by the greed of capitalists or of expectant "profiteers," whose fantastic enrichment has been rendered possible mainly as a consequence of the reckless finance practised by all belligerent Governments during the war. The demand was created by that same international psychology for the genesis and development of which the responsibility must be laid in all countries to the charge of the "Intelligentzia," the writers, professors, preachers and other "intellectuals" of the educated middle classes, the moulders of public opinion, whose support enables the ruling politicians and strategists to pursue in the dark their nefarious schemes of hegemony, of supremacy, of conquest, of revenge, at the expense of the deluded millions, who are expected to lay down their lives for their rulers' triumph and glory in which they can have no share,

But the ruling classes of the leading Powers of Europe were apparently blind to the multiplying symptoms of a sinister movement, led by renegades from their own ranks, from the ranks of the "Intelligentzia," whose slogan, "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" meant the menace of a coming war of the proletariat against the propertied classes—a menace to the very existence of the civilization of the modern world, whose fundamental principles were assailed with the blind fury of demented fanaticism. Instead of making ready to oppose a united front to the common enemy of them all, these ruling classes were absorbed in preparations for cutting each other's throats in a titanic contest that could only, whichever side won, leave Europe

a bleeding victim—as Romain Rolland, one of France's noblest minds, predicted.

And yet there is at the bottom of this International of Hate and of Revolt the same idea of the essential brotherhood of man which governs what may be called the International of Thought, represented by the highest and noblest minds in the leading nations of the world, the same idea also which unconsciously sways the minds of the multitudes in all countries who clamour for a League of Nations, and desperately cling to the hybrid product under that name upon which they are invited to pin their faith for the future of mankind.

In the meantime events in the Balkan Peninsula had taken a turn little expected by the diplomacy of the Great Powers. The collapse of Turkey, weakened by the Young Turk Revolution and by the war with Italy, had been unexpectedly rapid and complete; and the victory of the four allied Balkan Powers, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro, had given each of them more than they had dared to hope for—a result which was not at all to the liking of the Great Powers, whose solemn warning about the maintenance of the *status quo* had been thrown to the winds by the exultant victors. Besides, the division of the spoils threatened to become a problem difficult to solve.

The probabilities were, indeed, that a peaceful solution of the problem might have been found if the four victorious Balkan Powers had been left to settle it between themselves without any outside interference. But, of course, such a disinterestedness on the part of Russia and Austria-Hungary was not to be hoped for, although it was manifestly the only sensible policy to adopt. In both countries light-headed incompetence and dreamy conceptions of “manifest destiny” and “vital interests” had control of foreign policies. A solid and powerful federation of Balkan States would have stood in the way both of Russian ambitions in the direction of Constantinople and the Dardanelles and of Austro-Hungarian aims at reaching an outlet to the Ægean Sea at Salonika. Therefore such a simple and, indeed, the only rational solution of the vexed problem, even if the four Balkan Powers concerned had been found willing to sink their growing differences and to maintain

and consolidate their alliance, would not have been attainable.

Considered separately, and in view of the needless antagonism between the two Empires unfortunately existing and cultivated on both sides by ambitious politicians, a too powerful Bulgaria would have been contrary to Russian policy, and on the other hand a greatly strengthened Serbia with access to the Adriatic would have been considered as a Russian outpost constituting a most serious menace to the very existence of the Dual Monarchy.

This Austro-Russian antagonism and rivalry gave the tone to the discussions of the London Conference of the Great Powers assembled to adjudicate the division of the spoils among the victors of the first Balkan War, and necessarily influenced its ultimate decisions. The result was that this grave problem, on whose equitable solution depended the establishment in the Balkan Peninsula of conditions which would, at least to some extent, have been a guarantee of lasting peace between the Balkan nationalities, was handled by the Conference not from the point of view of the vital interests of these nationalities, but exclusively with a view to bring about some settlement that would in a measure conciliate the conflicting pretensions of Russian and Austro-Hungarian diplomacy. I advisedly use the expression "conflicting pretensions" and avoid speaking of "conflicting interests" of Russia and Austria-Hungary, since there was not, nor could there be, any conflict between the real vital interests of both, which could only be the maintenance of peace and which therefore demanded the sinking of all differences based on rivalry of imperialistic policies and pretensions to supremacy in Balkan affairs.

It must be admitted, however, that such a policy of renunciation was rendered somewhat more difficult to Austria-Hungary than to Russia by the apparent predominance in Russia of Pan-Slavistic tendencies, which, indeed, presented a serious menace to an Empire the majority of whose population belonged to the Slav race. On the other hand, the predominance of Pan-Slavism in Russia, in the sense of its suspected controlling influence over the policy of the Government, was certainly more

apparent than real, although it could not be denied that the activities of some of our diplomatic and consular agents were lending colour to such suspicions. The chief sinner in this respect was our Minister at Belgrade, Mr. Hartwig, a most honourable, capable and hard-working functionary but the last man to be entrusted with such a post at a time when the world's peace was hanging by the slenderest thread and depended on the avoidance of serious complications in the Balkans. He had ever since the beginning of his diplomatic career been in contact with Balkan policies and intrigues, and, like most ambitious diplomats, had become an adept of Slavophilism as the surest way to earn early promotion, a reputation of live patriotism and the powerful support of the Nationalist and Slavophile Press ensuring considerable latitude and impunity in the pursuit of lines of policy rather independent of, and even opposed to, the policies of the central authority for the time being.

By his open encouragement of Pan-Serbian ambitions—that is to say, of tendencies aiming at nothing less than the disruption of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy—he had become a most influential personage in Serbian political circles and had acquired the widest popularity, so much so that after his sudden death, shortly before the outbreak of the World War, it seems to have been intended to honour his memory as a friend of Serbia by the erection by public subscription of a monument in one of the squares of the capital—a project which probably will elicit less enthusiasm now that the Serbian people are in a position to count the cost at which their dreams of national aggrandizement have been realized.

It is hardly to be wondered at that Austro-Hungarian statesmen, however cognizant of the absence of political discipline in Russian diplomatic circles, especially in the East, should have taken serious alarm at the attitude of Russia's representative at Belgrade, which they had every reason to consider as being, if not inspired, in any case openly tolerated, by the Russian Government.

Russia's case before the London Conference does not seem to have elicited sufficiently strong support from her friends and allies—maybe on account of their conscious-

ness of its inherent weakness and of the not unreasonable nature of the Austro-Hungarian Government's apprehensions, maybe because they did not consider the time and occasion to be favourable for allowing the long-expected wind-up of the European drama to begin. Russian diplomacy had to submit with what good grace it could to letting her protégé, Serbia, be shorn of the principal fruit of her victories—access to the Adriatic; and Austria-Hungary was allowed to compel the evacuation by Serbia of Durazzo and the other ports conquered by her, as well as the abandonment by Montenegro of her conquest—Scutari. Why the loss by the Mountain Kingdom of that latter point should have been particularly resented by our Slavophiles I have not been able to find out. But I remember, being at the time in St. Petersburg, having met on the Nevsky Prospect a procession of Slavophile "Intelligentsia"—not very numerous and headed by a General whose name I forget—carrying national flags and placards, one with the inscription "Scutari to Montenegro," and another proclaiming "The Cross on St. Sophia"—amidst palpable indifference of the upper classes as well as of the people.

If this demonstration was intended as a means of intimidation, it lamentably failed of its effect upon those against whom it seemed to have been aimed. At least Mr. Sazonoff, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, against whom the wrath of the Slavophiles and the abuse of the Nationalist Press were mainly directed, treated these manifestations with commendable indifference, to his credit be it said.

Not satisfied with having inflicted upon Serbia the humiliation of having to renounce the hard-earned access to the Adriatic, gallantly won by the victory of her arms, Austria-Hungary, with the support of her allies, obtained the Conference's sanction for the creation of an independent principality or Kingdom of Albania, with a scion of one of the minor German dynasties as Sovereign under the fantastic title of "Mpret." The creation of this new independent State was obviously directed against the interests and ambitions of Serbia as well as of Greece, the result being that both these Powers were eager to compensate themselves in Macedonia at Bulgaria's expense for what

they had lost or missed in Albania. This situation could not but lead to an armed conflict between the former allies. Serbia and Greece joined hands, and with the help of the unprovoked intervention of Roumania, succeeded in inflicting on Bulgaria a crushing defeat, reflected in the terms of the treaty of peace which terminated the war and was negotiated at Bucharest—this time by the belligerents alone without assistance or interference by the Great Powers. It was one of those transactions which bear in themselves the germs of conflicts to come.

Whatever view one takes of the settlement of the second Balkan War by the Treaty of Bucharest, it was plain that it had left affairs in the Peninsula in a state of unstable equilibrium, which was bound to react on the general political situation in Europe. The greatly strengthened position of Serbia as a consequence of her victory in the war and the enhanced prestige she had thereby acquired in the eyes of Austria's Slav population, however gratifying to Russian diplomacy, could not but appear to the Vienna Government, for this very reason, in the light of a serious and growing menace to the safety of the Dual Monarchy. The resulting tension in Austro-Russian relations added a new element of danger to the all-pervading atmosphere of unrest which could bode no good to the cause of European peace.

Profoundly convinced of the near approach of the crisis, I could not help feeling greatly alarmed in watching the course of the Government's domestic policy. Apparently oblivious of the threatening danger of a war of unprecedented magnitude in which we were bound to become involved, and at a time when it was of the utmost importance to make sure of the loyalty and devotion to the Empire of the populations of our borderlands and outlying dominions and of all the various non-Russian nationalities included in its confines, the Government continued, as if on purpose, to irritate in many, sometimes even ludicrous, ways the populations whom it was manifestly desirable to conciliate by every means in its power.

Take the case of Finland. A glance at the map is sufficient to show the importance for Russia to be able, in case of war, to rely on the loyalty of the population of the

Grand Duchy from which the Empire was divided by a border-line distant barely some twenty miles from St. Petersburg. It was, therefore, the prime duty of Russian statesmanship to make sure of the loyalty of the Finnish population by a loyal observance of their constitutional rights, secured to the country by the will of the Emperor Alexander I and subsequently solemnly guaranteed by every one of his successors at their accession to the throne of Russia.

Ever since its union with Russia in 1809 Finland had been governed by the Russian Emperors as Grand Dukes of Finland, practically as a separate State enjoying the fullest possible autonomy, war and foreign affairs alone being left in the hands of the Imperial Government. Under the shelter of the Russian Crown, and thanks to its close connection with an enormous Empire open to its commerce, industry and enterprise, Finland had prospered exceedingly and had reached an unquestionably higher plane of civilization and culture than the Empire itself. Its population, the upper crust of which (some 13 per cent.) was of Swedish nationality, bred in an atmosphere of ingrained respect for law and order and profoundly attached to the country's free constitution, had never given any reason to question its loyalty to the Empire. Nothing more was required of sensible Russian policy than to adhere faithfully to the course followed by the first three Sovereigns, Alexander I, Nicholas I and Alexander II, who as Grand Dukes of Finland had governed the country to the entire satisfaction of its population and to the best advantage of the Empire, as well as of its most important dependency.

The wisdom of such a course failed, however, to commend itself to the narrow-minded and militant nationalism which, from the early days of Alexander III's reign, had begun to dominate the Government's domestic policy. It is likely that Finland might have escaped for some time longer the effect of the new tendencies which had gained the upper hand in Government circles and were enthusiastically supported by the nationalistic Press, because the Emperor and the Empress, Marie Feodorovna, a Danish sea king's daughter, both lovers of the sea, had taken to spending part of each summer among the picturesque

islands of the Finnish archipelago, the so-called "Skerries," had purchased a small island for use as a camping-out ground for picnics, fishing, etc., had come in contact with the local population and were said to have acquired a strong liking for Finland and their Finnish subjects.

Unfortunately a most insignificant incident—so the story goes, and I repeat it as told to me by several persons who were in a position to know more about it than reached the public's ears—brought about not, perhaps, a change in the Sovereign's sentiments, but a disposition to lend a more complaisant ear to insidious insinuations regarding the desirability of curbing Finland's too markedly independent attitude and suspected separatistic tendencies. It happened in this way: One morning the Emperor, on board his yacht anchored off a little village on one of the numerous islands, had written a letter, enclosed it in an envelope, had himself pasted on it a Russian postage stamp and had ordered it to be mailed at the local post office. The sailor sent to the post office with this letter brought it back and reported that the postmaster had refused to accept it, saying that no letters could be mailed in Finland bearing other than Finnish postage stamps, and had insisted on his refusal in spite of having been told that the sender of the letter was the Sovereign himself. This report, when it reached the Emperor, perhaps not without some added colouring of patriotic indignation, may have ruffled his temper and have caused him to attach to this small matter more importance than it evidently deserved. At any rate His Majesty was said to have ordered that steps be taken to remedy a state of affairs which presumed to prevent the use of Russian postage stamps anywhere within the confines of the Empire.

Although the constitutional right of the Grand Duchy to have its own postal organization and its own postage stamps had never been questioned before, nor, indeed, could be questioned any more than its constitutional right to its own coinage and to its tariff economy, the Finnish Senate or Diet, or both, were found willing, presumably from a sincere desire to avoid friction, to waive the question of principle, to withdraw Finnish and to introduce Russian postage stamps for exclusive use in Finland. This

was in itself a matter of small importance, but it proved the entering wedge which in the course of time led to further encroachments by the Imperial bureaucracy on the constitutional rights of Finland, until the beginning of a prolonged constitutional conflict in 1899, when under Governor-General Bobrikoff's administration the country had to submit to a dictatorial regime which culminated in General Bobrikoff's assassination and the outbreak of something like a revolution in 1905.

In the following year the *status quo ante annum* 1899 was re-established, a new Diet was convoked and adopted an extremely radical system of representation on the basis of universal and direct suffrage, the franchise being extended to all men and women of twenty-four years of age and over. The parliamentary regime introduced at the same time in Russia proved, however, very hostile to Finland's autonomy. Russia's only really powerful and efficient Prime Minister—whether from a mistaken belief in the necessity in the Empire's interest of such a measure, or from subserviency to the influential nationalist group in the Duma, whose support he may have thought it necessary to secure to the Government—caused the Duma to pass the notorious law of June 17/30, 1910, stipulating that the Russian Duma and Council of the Empire have sole legislative power in matters affecting Russia and Finland jointly, a law which was resented by the whole population of Finland as a most serious encroachment on Finland's constitution and an attempt at depriving the Grand Duchy of its autonomy.

On the basis of this law another one was passed by the Russian Legislative Assemblies in the following year placing Russians on an equality with Finlanders in the Grand Duchy. This law in itself was perfectly just. It did away, indeed, with an anomaly which, although it had always existed, had never before attracted any particular attention, presumably because it had never caused any great practical inconvenience. One of the most important points, or perhaps the most important point, in this question of the equality of rights between Russians and Finlanders, concerned the right to enter the Government service, a point of much greater importance to natives of

Finland than to natives of Russia. There have always been great numbers of Finlanders in the service of the Imperial Government—some of them having occupied ministerial posts, such as Admirals Possiette and Avelan, or General Riedigers, and other high military commands such as General Grippenbergh in the war with Japan and General Baron Mannerheim in the late World War, all of them having served our common Fatherland with never-questioned loyalty and great distinction—whereas there could hardly have been any apprehension of Finland being overrun with Russian candidates for admission to the Finnish Government service. There could, anyway, be no practical, any more than theoretical, objection on the part of Finland to the setting aside of the existing anomaly. Nor was there any. It was simply a question of how to do it. And that is where the difference in the mentality of the two sides came into play and caused a needless conflict which embittered the relations between them to a considerable and particularly regrettable extent at a time when it was most important to avoid any such undesirable friction.

The Finnish Diet obviously would have been willing to pass the required legislation. This, however, would not have satisfied our reactionary nationalists. Finland was to be taught that its autonomy had been granted as an act of grace by the Emperor Alexander I, revokable at any time, and that Finland had really no constitutional rights which Russia was bound to respect. It was considered necessary to impose the law of equality on Finland by an Act passed by the Russian Legislative Assemblies based on the law of June 17/30, 1910, which the population of Finland considered to be a violation of the Finnish constitution.

The result was the flat refusal of the Finnish courts to apply the law held to be unconstitutional. This led to quite unjustifiable measures of coercion openly violating the rights guaranteed to Finland and confirmed by a succession of Russian monarchs. Judges of the Finnish courts were arrested *manu militari*, carried off to St. Petersburg, sentenced to terms of imprisonment by a Russian court; the president of the refractory Diet, Mr. Svenhufvud, was exiled to Siberia; and so forth.

The effect which these arbitrary proceedings was bound to produce on a peaceable, law-abiding people, bred in reverence for the country's constitution and determined to stand up for what they held to be their rights under it, may be imagined. The failure to foresee and realize this effect can only be explained by the prevalence of a mentality labouring under the atavistic influence of centuries of slavery under the Mongolian yoke and inaccessible to a conception of the supremacy of right over might.

If, now, we turn to Poland we shall find that ever since the Polish insurrection of 1863 our Government had been pursuing a policy inspired by tendencies no less destructive of any hope of bridging the gulf of mutual antagonism created by a centuries-old feud between the two branches of the Slav race, and no less unreasonable from the point of view of the right interests of the Empire than our recent policy in regard to Finland. The pursuit of such a policy in respect to Poland was rendered easier by the fact that there even constitutional scruples could not stand in the way of our bureaucracy's arbitrary proceedings, little as such scruples would have carried weight, as we have seen in the case of Finland.

The Polish constitution had been abolished after the insurrection of 1830 and the last vestige of Polish autonomy had disappeared after the insurrection of 1863. Although the Emperor retained the title of King (Tsar) of Poland, even the name "Kingdom of Poland" disappeared from the official language and was replaced by the absurd appellation "Pri-Vislinsky Kray" (which means "Region situated on the Vistula"), a designation particularly offensive to Polish national feeling.

The system of forcible Russification inaugurated after the first insurrection had acquired a particularly harsh complexion after that of 1863. For instance, the compulsory exclusive use of the Russian language in all Government and public institutions of every kind, in the University of Warsaw, in all public and even private schools, was insisted upon apparently in the belief that it would prove an efficacious means of Russification, although it was plainly bound to be resented as a most odious measure of oppression.

But then the very idea of attempting to denationalize an intensely patriotic, chivalrous people, proud of its historic past, its language, its literature and its Western culture, assimilated long before Russia had emerged from barbarism, could only have germinated in a mentality such as, in the beginning of the World War, bethought itself of the advisability of changing the name of the Empire's capital by giving it a Slavic sound, presumably for the purpose of stimulating the people's patriotism or of demonstrating its own.

It appears, however, that the danger of persisting in a policy so exasperating to the Polish people, at a time when all the world was living in the apprehension of a general European war, at last dawned on our ruling bureaucracy. A Bill was introduced and duly passed by the Duma authorizing the use of the Polish language in their deliberations by the Municipal Councils in all towns in Poland! This measure—in the light of recent events simply ludicrous in its hesitating and timid liberalism—was nevertheless not destined to become law. Rejected by the Council of the Empire by a small majority, the Bill was, by the Emperor's command, reintroduced in the Duma, was duly passed again only to be rejected a second time by the Upper House, this time by a slightly larger majority in spite of the fact that all the Ministers entitled to sit in the House came to vote for it, and in spite of its being known that the Emperor desired its passage.

In this affair the ruling bureaucracy had certainly shown some goodwill and a modicum of statesmanship, but had been unable to overcome the obscurantist opposition of reactionary nationalism which dominated our Upper House. The Emperor did not conceal his annoyance, and in the course of a farewell audience which I had requested, as usual, and been honoured with after the close of the session before going abroad, His Majesty expressed himself very freely on the subject and asked me whether I could explain the reason why a measure, in the passage of which he was known to take a personal interest, could have been twice rejected by the Council of the Empire and apparently by the votes of the right side of the House, composed mostly of life members appointed by

the Crown. I could only assure the Emperor that no opposition to his personal wishes could possibly have been intended and that the votes of the majority could have been inspired only by motives of mistaken patriotism and apprehensions of the possible consequences of any departure from the traditional policy that had been pursued in regard to Poland ever since the insurrection of 1863.

I availed myself of the occasion to remind His Majesty of the fact that the wise policy of his great ancestor, the Emperor Alexander I—the only policy that could really serve the best interests of Russia as well as of Poland—had been similarly opposed by Karamzine, Russia's greatest historian, in a celebrated memorandum, which also could have been inspired only by the purest patriotic, albeit palpably mistaken, motives.

If in the case of Poland the traditions of Alexander I's statesmanlike policy had been discarded, it might be claimed that two formidable insurrections had furnished a colourable pretext if not a compelling reason therefor. No such reason, or even pretext, however, could have been invoked to explain a departure from the traditions of the policy which Peter the Great and all his successors until the reign of Alexander III had followed in regard to the so-called Baltic Provinces, Esthonia, Livonia and, since 1795, Courland. The landowning nobility and the bulk of the bourgeoisie of the towns, forming about 7 or 8 per cent. of the population of these provinces, were of German descent. Their loyalty to the Empire of which these provinces formed an integral part, had never been questioned. All their interests, no less than those of the native populations, were identical with those of the Russian nation. No separatistic tendencies had ever existed before, neither among the German minority nor among the Esthonian and Lettish majority; nor was there any conceivable reason why such tendencies should have existed.

Geographically these provinces are a part of the great Russian plain forming its natural outlet to the Baltic Sea; economically they are dependent on this immense "hinterland" with its unbounded resources; their connection with Russia has built up their prosperity, considerably outdistancing the economic development of the neighbour-

ing Russian provinces ; and last, but not least, strategically and politically—as a glance at the map will show—the only political entity in which they could possibly be included with regard for their own safety and advantage, was bound to be the Russian State.

As far as the other alternative is concerned, the creation of "independent" republics of Esthonia and "Lativa," as favoured by those who appear to see their interest in the dismemberment of Russia, I make bold to say that no such eventuality could ever have been dreamed of by even the most disgruntled and irreconcilable opponent of Russian rule in these parts. That there should be no lack of such would almost seem to have been the aim, and had certainly been the result, of the policy of forcible Russification inaugurated by the Russian bureaucracy. It took the form of proselytism of the Greek Orthodox Church among the peasantry with the powerful aid and encouragement of the State ; of the introduction of the compulsory exclusive use of the Russian language in the courts, the University of Dorpat, nationalized under the name of Youriev, in the public and private schools, municipalities, etc.—in a word, of using the language as a means of oppression, a form of oppression which, as experience has amply demonstrated, wherever it has been attempted, has always been particularly resented by those upon whom such linguistic tyranny has been practised, and has always failed to accomplish the political ends aimed at.

In addition, some Machiavellian policies appear to have been practised in fostering racial animosity between the majority of Letts and Esthonians and the German minority of the population, by seemingly favouring the former, with the result that at the time of the revolutionary outbreak of 1905 the "Jacqueries" in the Baltic Provinces assumed a particularly violent and dangerous character, such as to necessitate their repression with a ruthlessness which rendered Russian rule the more odious in the eyes of the native population as it showed itself in the rôle of protector of the rights of property of the landowning German minority.

To sum up, our ruling bureaucracy had succeeded, under the inspiration of narrow-minded militant nation-

alism, in turning what had been perhaps the most prosperous and unquestionably the most cultured part of the Empire and the staunchest support of the throne, into a seething cauldron of race hatred and social unrest, at the same time uniting the warring elements of the population in common resentment of its own arbitrary rule.

Since this had been the outcome of the Government's policy in our most important and most exposed border provinces with a population of alien races, one would have thought that narrow-minded nationalism, taking to heart this object-lesson, would have refrained from giving free rein to its militant ardour in another part of the Empire—Little Russia (Malorossiya), comprising the "governments" or provinces of Kharkoff, Tchernigoff, Poltava, Ekaterinoslav, Kieff, Podolia, and part of Kursk to which it has now become fashionable to apply the old term "Ukraina," which means simply "borderland." The population is of pure Russian stock, being one of the three branches of the Russian family (Great, Little and White Russians) and uses a dialect no farther removed from the Russian language than the Provençal dialect is from French.

The ruling bureaucracy, however, in its zeal for Russification and unification, took to systematic persecution of the Little Russian dialect, thereby simply promoting the growth among the Little Russian "Intelligentzia" of an incipient seditious movement which it was intended to prevent. The acme of senseless arbitrariness was reached when the Government prohibited the celebration of the anniversary of the birth of Shevtchenko, Little Russia's greatest poet—a measure the provocative and aggravating absurdity of which could only have been equalled if, for instance, the French Government had chosen to forbid a similar celebration in honour of the great Provençal poet, Mistral.

Incidentally I would observe that the word "Ukraina" (not Ukrainia, as one sometimes sees it misspelt) has never served to designate a political entity; it has always been applied colloquially to an ill-defined region embracing the "governments" or provinces enumerated above. It has been popularized of late, first by German and then by Entente war propaganda since the dismemberment of

Russia became the policy first of our former enemies and then of our former allies. It cannot be denied, however, that the willingness of the Little Russian "Intelligentsia" to co-operate in the dismemberment of our common Fatherland by the creation of an "independent Ukraina" is mainly due to the unwisdom of the Russian bureaucracy's nationalistic policy.

Nor has our Government displayed less unwisdom in dealing with the Jewish question. It is not my purpose to enter into an exhaustive examination of this momentous and thorny question, to the only rational solution of which even a statesman of Witte's calibre could not see his way clear. I have always been convinced that the denial to the Jewish population of equality of rights was as unjustifiable in principle as it was bound to be an unmitigated evil in practice, and was utterly indefensible as a matter of policy.

I have previously mentioned the impressions I carried away from some months' sojourn in Transcaucasia half a century ago. I refer to it now only to mention that since then the intolerant policy pursued by the Government had succeeded in fomenting bitter racial animosities between the three nationalities, Georgians, Armenians and Tartars, composing the bulk of the population, and in uniting them all in common hatred of Russian rule. It had played havoc with the beneficent results of the wise rule of such Viceroys as Prince Worontzoff, Prince Bariatinsky and the Grand Duke Michael Nicolawitch, brother of Alexander II, and would have done worse had not the powerful influence which the last Viceroy, Count Worontzoff-Dashkoff, a liberal and enlightened statesman, possessed at Court, rendered him sufficiently independent of the Central Government to enable him to undo some of the mischief which had resulted from the activities of his predecessors in office.

In surveying the political situation as a whole I could not fail to realize that the Government's foreign as well as domestic policy pursued during the last two decades had resulted in placing the country in the imminent danger of being involved in a general European war and of being found at the critical moment totally unprepared to meet

such an emergency, complicated by our having systematically created in the whole chain of dominions and border provinces surrounding the Empire in the West and South an atmosphere of discontent and hostility to Russian rule which eventually could only benefit the interests of our potential enemies.

My profound conviction of the alarming character of the situation prompted me to avail myself of my position as Member of the Council of the Empire for the purpose of once more sounding a note of warning, this time from a tribune which would secure to it the widest publicity. The difficulty, however, consisted not only in the rules of the House, which excluded the discussion of questions connected with foreign policy, but also in the rigour with which the President of the Council, Mr. Akimoff, a very able man but extreme reactionary, was wont to apply these rules, especially to Members whose political views he did not share.

It became necessary, therefore, to guard against the danger of being called to order before having had a chance to utter all I would have to say. With this end in view, having prepared with the greatest care the text of my speech, confining myself to generalities and avoiding as far as possible reference to anything that could lay me open to interruptions from the Chair, I called upon the President of the Council in the morning of the day when I had made up my mind to address the House, read to him the full text of my speech, and requested him not to interrupt me before I had concluded what I had to say.

Mr. Akimoff listened attentively to the reading of my speech and said that personally he had no formal objection to offer, the more so as on that day he was not going to preside, having requested the Vice-President to take his place; but he asked me why I insisted on uttering views the expression of which could do no possible good and would make me hosts of enemies. To this I could only reply that I was not inexperienced enough to imagine that my saying what I intended to say would do much good, or indeed any good, but that my silence would do still less.

I delivered my speech on April 3/16, 1913, in the Council of the Empire in connection with a debate that

was taking place on the subject of the Bill regarding the use of the Polish language by the municipalities in Poland which had come up from the Duma. When I had resumed my seat a celebrated jurist and popular orator, member of the extreme Liberal group of the Council, whose acquaintance I had not made before, came up to me, introduced himself and said :

“ I congratulate you on your speech and I share your views. But—they are the views of an Athenian expressed before an audience of Scythians.”

We both felt that the darkening shadow of fate was already upon us. But neither of us could foresee that we were fated to witness the suicide of an Empire in the summer of the following year, and three years later the suicide of a Nation.

CHAPTER XXXIII

On the brink—Satanism and the world order—Tsardom—Goremykin as Prime Minister—Scene in the Duma—Kerensky—A Press campaign—Russo-German antagonism—"Deutschum"—My last interview with the Emperor Nicholas—Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand—Progress of events—A glimmer of hope—The die is cast.

I HAVE now reached a point where I must begin to relate the tragic history of the last days of an Empire which was hated and feared by all, pretended friends and open foes alike, as a supposed menace to all Europe, and whose suicide, committed in entering the World War, was followed by that of the nation and left the world in the presence of a menace not to Europe alone but to the very foundations on which rests the civilization of contemporary mankind. It is a task which I approach with profound emotion, conscious of my utter inability to convey in feeble words an adequate impression of the sombre grandeur of the tragedy.

But before proceeding with my narrative I must attempt to clear up, as far as possible, some of the causes of the misapprehension of Russian conditions so widely prevailing in countries standing on a higher plane of political and cultural development, which, in its turn, has influenced the attitude of public opinion in those countries in regard to the revolutionary activities of Russia's own deluded sons, and has therefore been a considerable factor in preparing the ground for the catastrophe in which Russia was to perish.

Perhaps, in endeavouring to explain what I am aiming at in this respect, I could do no better than begin by quoting a great English writer, who in a recent article published in the *Contemporary Review*, dealing primarily with Great Britain's position in regard to her subject communities, gives eloquent expression to views which, I think,

are fully applicable to the relations of the Russian Empire, not only to its dependent alien communities but also to its own revolutionary subjects :

The relation of empires to subject communities is, in fact, the great seed-ground for those states of mind which I have grouped under the name of Satanism. An appalling literature of hatred is in existence, in which unwilling subjects have sung and exulted over the downfall of great empires. . . . The cry of oppressed peoples against the Turk and the Russian is written in many languages and renewed in many centuries. What makes this literature so appalling is, first, that it is inspired by hatred ; and next that the hatred is at least in part just ; and, thirdly, that we ourselves are now sitting on the throne once occupied by the objects of these execrations. Perhaps most of us are so accustomed to think of Babylon and Nineveh and Tyre, and even Rome, as seats of mere tyranny and corruption that we miss the real meaning and warning of their history. These imperial cities mostly rose to empire, not because of their faults but because of their virtues. . . . And we think of them as mere types of corruption ! The hate they inspired among their subjects has so utterly swamped in the memory of mankind the benefits of their good government, or the contented and peaceful lives which they made possible to their own peoples. . . . The spirit of unmixed hatred toward the existing world order, the spirit which rejoices in any widespread disaster to the world's rulers, is perhaps more rife to-day than it has been for over a thousand years. It is felt against all ordered Governments, but chiefly against all Imperial Governments ; and I think it is directed more widely and intensely against Great Britain than against any other Power ; I think we may add that, while everywhere dangerous, it is capable of more profound world-wreckage by its action against us than by any other form that it is now taking.

Mr. Gilbert Murray evidently realizes the dangerous character of this spirit, even if directed against a country whose history and institutions assure to it a leading position among the foremost nations of the world. How much more dangerous, then, must a similar spirit have been when directed against Russia, a late-comer in the family of European nations, whose institutions appeared repellent to those who would not consider whether they were not the only ones really suitable to the state of the nation's political and cultural development. This spirit which animated our revolutionaries and political malcontents, was finding a friendly echo and encouragement in all countries where Tsardom and autocracy were considered to be a regime against which revolt was not only excusable

but laudable and legitimate. Such sympathy and encouragement could only have been given under a total misapprehension of the real nature of Tsardom on the one hand and on the other of the eventual consequences of its destruction aimed at by our revolutionaries.

In order to reach a full understanding of what the catastrophe of the Tsardom meant for the Russian people, and of its further meaning as a sinister menace to all our race and civilization, it will not come amiss to revert to the teachings of history, which has seen the decay and disappearance of more than one sometime proud and seemingly indestructible civilization. The ruin of that of the ancient Roman world was brought about—as its celebrated historiographer, Guglielmo Ferrero, avers—not only by the slow decay due to internal causes, but also by what he calls a terrible accident, which, by destroying the keystone of all legal order, threw this civilization into the convulsions of revolutionary despotism. That political accident was the destruction by the Emperor Septimius Severus of the authority of the Senate; that is to say, of the only principle of legitimacy, hallowed by the traditions of centuries, on whose theretofore solid foundation rested the colossal edifice of the Roman Empire.

The World War (continues Guglielmo Ferrero) also reminds one as to its consequences, only on a larger scale, of the revolution of Septimius Severus, because it has destroyed or weakened all the principles of authority and of legitimacy which in modern civilization supported the legal order. These principles were of two kinds: the divine right of dynasties in the powerful monarchies of Central and Northern Europe; the will of the people in the democracies of Western Europe. By the downfall of the Russian Empire, of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the German Empire divine right received a blow from which it will be difficult, if not impossible, for it to recover. But it is very doubtful if the opposite principle will profit by its ruin. That principle, not very clear in itself and very difficult of application, seems to have emerged from this great crisis weakened and discredited to such an extent that its unexpected triumph in the Central Empires and in the Russian Empire failed to excite any hope or any enthusiasm in the rest of Europe. Shall we, as an outcome of these uncertainties, witness, as happened seventeen hundred years ago, a prolonged crisis of revolutions and wars which may disperse the treasures accumulated by the labour of centuries?

Without attempting to answer this question put by

the historian of *The Greatness and Decline of Rome*, I might say that his views, as outlined in a recent article of his, from which I have quoted above the main points, go far towards confirming my contention that our political parties which were aiming at the destruction of Tsardom and autocracy by violent means instead of honestly helping to reform them by peaceful processes of evolution, were unwittingly committing an unpardonable crime against not only our country, but against the welfare of mankind.

Moreover, by seeking and relying on foreign support in their reckless warfare against the mainstay of their country's unity and greatness they were disgracing themselves and the cause they were pretending to serve. It is to be supposed that their foreign sympathizers could not possibly have given them their moral support if they had been able to realize the veritable nature of the menace which the triumph of the cause on which they were wasting their sympathies would mean to their own countries and to civilization itself.

Neither could public opinion in the Western democracies understand what these institutions, Tsardom, Autocracy and Bureaucracy, really meant to, and actually achieved for, the Russian people. It could not, or would not, see that it was autocratic Tsardom that had, from the modest nucleus of the principality of Moscow, built up in the course of centuries one of the greatest and mightiest empires the world has ever seen.

Also, swamped as it was by the flood of virulent denunciation emanating from Russian revolutionaries and political malcontents, it could not realize that it was this same hated Tsardom, this same vilified but, in spite of all its sins and failings, fairly efficient bureaucracy that had built up the fabric under whose shelter some hundred and seventy million human beings were able to lead a peaceful existence such as now may only be dreamed of as life in a lost paradise. Nor could public opinion abroad realize what even some Russians failed to understand, that Tsardom was the keystone of the edifice of the Empire and that the removal of this keystone would unfailingly cause the whole edifice to collapse with a crash that would shake a continent.

Since Tsardom and autocracy have disappeared and

been replaced by the "dictatorship of the proletariat"—with results which I shall not here discuss, but which can hardly be gratifying either to those who expect to secure the lion's share in the exploitation of Russia's undeveloped resources or to those who count on the restoration of the credit and solvency of Russia for a chance to recover part at least of the billions of money loaned to her—a juster view of Russian conditions seems to be gradually gaining ground in foreign public opinion, to judge from some articles in the English Press which have lately come to my notice. Thus I find in a London weekly paper, the *Russian Outlook* of December 27, 1919, an article under the heading "Development under the Imperial Government," the author of which writes :

The more one looks into the state of Russia under the old Imperial Government, the more one is impressed by its care—real or apparent—for the life of the Russian people and for their well-being in every way. It seems that this care was real enough as far as the framing and putting into working the various ordinances, and only became apparent rather than real through the corruptness of local administrators, who, owing to the general rottenness of the bureaucracy, were able to convert to their own advantage that which was intended for the well-being of industries and of the population generally. Such an evil as this, had the Government endured, must have remedied itself ; for the spread of democratic power was rapidly forcing Russia into line with Western European countries when the revolution disorganized the country. Had democracy modified the autocracy of Tsarism by a process of evolution, instead of destroying it by revolution, there was such machinery available for the development of the country as can hardly be rebuilt in the present century, unless some genius of government should come along and enforce the old system.

These views I hold to be entirely sound. In fact, they are and have always been my own ; but I am glad to quote their expression by an English writer who obviously cannot be open to the suspicion of undue bias, as a former servant of the Russian Crown might be in the opinion of prejudiced persons.

Twice within a quarter of a century had attempts been made to reform the autocracy by the introduction of institutions designed to prepare the nation for the gradual assimilation of a constitutional regime on Western lines. Twice had these attempts been foiled by the folly of the

revolutionary parties and been followed by periods of reaction—the natural swinging of the pendulum in the opposite direction. And yet Russia's last strong man, Stolypin, had succeeded in keeping alive the principle of representative government, in a sense limited indeed, but best suited to the state of the political and cultural development of the Russian people and to the real needs of the nation. But the educated and property-owning classes had recovered from the alarm caused by the Revolution of 1905-6 and the quondam frightened supporters of a Government in whom they had temporarily seen the saviour of society had resumed their attitude of carping criticism and ill-concealed hostility. The revolutionary parties had succeeded in removing by cowardly assassination the one man whom they rightly judged capable of leading to a brilliant future of prosperity and contentment—a policy for obvious reasons to be particularly dreaded by those whose aim was the destruction of the social and political fabric of the State.

On the other hand, with the disappearance of the clear-sighted and strong-willed helmsman, the rudder had fallen into the less virile hands of an estimable functionary, who did not possess the strength needed to keep the ship of State steadily on a course laid out with foresight and sound statesmanship. Unrestrained obscurantist reaction gained the upper hand, with the result that profound discontent was becoming more and more general and was beginning to affect even such social circles in the capital and in the provinces as were least inclined to systematic opposition to the Government.

Profoundly impressed with the dangerous character of the situation, I made up my mind to sound once more a note of warning. At the sitting of the Council of the Empire on January 29 (February 11), 1914, when a Bill for the regulation of the sale of spirituous liquors was under consideration, I mounted the tribune and after some desultory remarks relating to the pending Bill, succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the presiding officer, who may have been at heart in sympathy with me, and addressed the House at some length on the general political situation, a subject which under our rules we were not permitted to

discuss. While I was speaking I felt that I had with me the sympathy of the centre and the left of the House, but I noticed signs of marked displeasure in the ranks of the right, and especially the extreme right, for whom my discourse was meant and to whom, indeed, I directly addressed it; and as I fully expected, it did not in any way whatever affect the Government's persistence in the suicidal policy it was pursuing. Within a few weeks following I was the recipient of letters and telegrams of sympathy and adhesion from many parts of the country and had the satisfaction of being reviled by the leading nationalist paper, the *Novoe Vremia*, as a feudal baron shedding crocodile tears over the fate of the country, and by the leading reactionary paper, Prince Meshtchersky's *Grashdanin*, as having undergone a regrettable process of "Americanization."

By a coincidence it happened that on the very day I had been speaking in the Council of the Empire the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Kokovtseff (created Count on this occasion), was made to resign and was replaced as Prime Minister by Mr. Goremykin, the same who had held this office at the time of the dissolution of the first Duma. His appointment, therefore, seemed to indicate a resolve of the Sovereign in favour of a recrudescence rather than a relaxation of the reactionary policy pursued by the Government. I am unable to say whether such was really the Emperor's intention, or whether it was the result of some pressure brought to bear on him by domestic influences which his tender and loving nature rendered him unable to resist, or lastly, whether it was perhaps simply his personal preference for Goremykin, who was an accomplished courtier and possessed a certain charm of manner which may have rendered necessary intercourse with him as head of the Government less of a drudgery than with his predecessor.

My personal acquaintanceship with Goremykin was of the slightest. I had, of course, been meeting him frequently enough in the Assembly, of which we were fellow-members, and I found him very good company indeed, a cultivated, open mind, not by any means a reactionary, only very conservative in his belief in the saving virtue of

the Government's traditional policies as best adapted to the real needs of the country. Besides, being by some ten or twelve years my senior, he had already achieved a certain detachment from the cares of this world and an indifference bordering on that slightly cynical attitude which the French designate by the apt but untranslatable slang expression *je m'enfichisme*—a blissful state which it has not yet been my good fortune to attain; in short, a personality, in spite of its many estimable and attractive parts, about the least qualified to face at the head of its Government the greatest crisis in a great empire's destiny.

I was interested to see how his appointment would be received by the Duma and went to the Taurida Palace to attend the sitting when Goremykin was to make his first appearance before the representatives of the nation and to acquaint them with the political programme of the Cabinet decided upon on his reappointment as its head. From the coign of vantage of a seat in the box reserved for the use of members of the Upper House, I watched the proceedings with mixed feelings. My expectation that the sitting would be a stormy one was realized. As soon as he had ascended the tribune the storm broke. It was plain that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and "Labourites," sitting on the extreme left, although composing but a very small minority of the House, were determined not to let him speak. The disorderly noise they produced was of such a volume that neither the frantic ringing of the bell by the President nor the counter-cheers of the supporters of the Government could drown it. After waiting a few minutes for the storm to abate, Goremykin calmly folded up his papers, descended from the rostrum and returned to his seat in the ministerial box. President Rodzianko at last succeeded in restoring order, and, after admonishing the extreme left for their unruly behaviour, invited the Prime Minister to reascend the tribune. But Goremykin had barely spoken a few words when the disorder broke loose again with redoubled intensity, and he was literally howled down.

After having again resumed his seat, the President proposed to the House to expel for the day's sitting its unruly members who had flagrantly defied the authority of the

Chair. This was agreed to by a majority vote of the parties habitually supporting the Government. The subsequent proceedings occupied considerable time, as the President had to submit to a vote of the House each individual case by naming the member to be expelled. When he invited the first member whose expulsion had been voted, to withdraw, the latter refused to obey, declaring he would only yield to force. The President had to send for the Military Commandant of the Palace and order him to remove the recalcitrant member. This time he submitted after having demanded of the Commandant to touch his shoulder by way of symbolizing the employment of force. This proceeding was being gone through for the expulsion of each one of the refractory deputies, of whom there were some ten or twelve. When the last one to be expelled had reached the door accompanied by the Commandant of the Palace, he turned around and shouted at the top of his voice, addressing his fellow-members of the Duma, "We are struggling for your liberty, but you prefer to be the slaves of these tyrants!" at the same time pointing the finger of scorn at the ministerial box where the mild-mannered Goremykin with the other very commonplace-looking "tyrants" sat, calmly stroking his long grey whiskers in amused contemplation of the grotesque scene.

What struck me most was the artificial, distinctly un-Russian character of these proceedings. For whatever qualities or defects may be attributed to the Russian national character, a taste for declamatory theatrical effects has never been accounted one of them. I do not now recollect the names of the revolutionary Duma members who distinguished themselves by their noisy conduct in demonstrating their opposition to the Government, but I believe the unfortunate Kerensky was one of them—the same Kerensky who, three years later, was to pose in the preposterous character of Russia's dictator, of faithful ally of the Entente and heroic Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armies; who, by his incompetence, weakness and folly, was to open the door to the advent of the Bolshevik regime, and at the critical moment to seek safety in inglorious flight, abandoning his naïve but honest and estimable bourgeois colleagues to the tender mercies of the sinister

bandits of Bolshevism who were besieging them in the Winter Palace defended only by a battalion of boy cadets and women soldiers; the same Kerensky who is said to be still posing as the saviour of Russia and to be cooling his heels in the ante-rooms of statesmen and politicians in Paris and London, receiving, now that his services are no longer needed, the contemptuous treatment due to a man who unwittingly—let it go at that—has betrayed and ruined his country.

What became of the other participants in the demonstration I do not know, but suppose that, if not tortured and murdered by their Bolshevik "comrades," they are now enjoying the sweetness of life under the rule of real and sanguinary tyrants of their own breed.

The ministerial declaration, when at last Goremykin was enabled to read it in his unimpressive, perfunctory way, turned out to be quite anodyne and unobjectionable. It was listened to with decent attention, but failed, of course, to produce any noteworthy effect as far as strengthening the Government's position was concerned. Altogether, the impression I carried away from this sitting of the Duma was not of a kind to encourage much hope for salvation to come from that particular quarter, and events have but too tragically confirmed my doubts and apprehensions in that respect.

The winter season of 1913-14 was one of the most brilliant—as it was to be the last—that St. Petersburg had seen. Society was gaily dancing on an unsuspected volcano, quite unconscious of the approaching catastrophe; nor could anyone even dream of the depth of misery and unspeakable horror to which a once magnificent capital, with its teeming population and thousands of happy homes, was to be reduced in so near a future.

Among the most poignant memories of that fateful season, I recall an afternoon dance in the carnival week at the palace of the Grand Duchess Vladimir, to which she had invited the Emperor and Empress with their four daughters, the youngest two mere children. It makes my heart bleed when I see now before my mind's eye the radiantly happy faces of these innocent young ones rapturously enjoying their first ball—which, alas! was to be their last—

blissfully unconscious of the unutterably awful fate which was in store for all of them, a family so tenderly united in purest love in life as in death.

Whether, and to what extent, the apparently listless unconcern of the smart society of the capital was shared in by our ruling powers I am unable to say. Not being in touch with our Foreign Department, I was not in a position to be acquainted with the view taken of the political situation in Europe by those in whose hands rested the direction of our foreign policy.

There occurred, however, in close succession, two journalistic events which might well have claimed the serious attention of our diplomacy. Some time in February or the beginning of March an alarmist article appeared in the *Koelnische Zeitung*—the semi-official organ of the German Foreign Department—in the shape of a letter from the correspondent of that paper at St. Petersburg calling attention to the symptoms of growing hostility toward Germany in Russian influential circles, which he pretended to have been able to observe, and which, in his opinion, meant a serious menace to his country. Such, as far as I can now recollect, was the trend of the author's reasoning. This article created a considerable sensation at the time and was generally supposed to have been inspired by the German Embassy in the Russian capital, although the latter steadfastly denied having had anything to do with it. Be that as it may, it was plain that the appearance of such an article in a Press organ reputed to reflect the views of the German Government meant the inauguration of a campaign to arouse public opinion in Germany to a realization of the necessity of a "preventive" war, evidently already decided upon in the preceding year in connection with the levy of an extraordinary war impost of a billion marks, to which I had alluded in my speech in the Council of the Empire on January 29th.

With this end in view it was obviously necessary to raise and exploit the spectre of the Russian menace, so as to impress the popular mind with the fear of an impending war on two fronts in defence of the Fatherland, and to rouse thereby the spirit of the masses to the fighting-pitch. When, therefore, shortly afterwards a bellicose article

under the heading "We are Ready," announcing to the world that we were ready not only for a defensive but also for an offensive war, appeared in one of the leading Russian newspapers, and when it became known that this article in the shape of an interview with the Minister of War, General Soukhomlinoff, had been dictated by the Minister himself to a representative of the *Bourse Gazette* (*Birzhevye Vedomosti*), it simply had the effect of bringing grist to the mill of the German militarists by enabling them to point out that the Russian menace was not a creature of their imagination, but a most serious reality. It is not easy to understand what could have prompted General Soukhomlinoff to publish at such a moment this empty boast—as it proved to have been when put to the test—for it could hardly have been intended as a bluff to intimidate a potential enemy, which would have been silly, and still less as a deliberate provocation, which would have been downright criminal. One could only attribute it to that same irresponsible recklessness which, in conjunction with the wrong-headed incompetence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, was, at the critical moment, to push the country over the brink of the precipice.

In preceding chapters I have referred to the origin and causes, in so far as Russia was concerned, of the estrangement between the two neighbouring Empires which had gradually developed in the course of the last decades. In order, now, to shed some light upon the reason why it was destined to become the final determining cause of the outbreak of the World War it will be necessary to examine also, from what might justifiably be considered to have been the German point of view, the history of the origin and growth of this estrangement. Its origin dates back to a very insignificant—one might say contemptibly petty—cause: the vainglory, jealousy and offended *amour-propre* of two leading statesmen. In 1875 the Russian Chancellor, Prince Gortschakoff, in a circular telegram to all Russian Ambassadors, dated from Berlin, where he was in attendance on the Emperor Alexander II, announced to the world that "peace was now assured," a covert but sufficiently plain suggestion that the abandonment by Germany of the plan of a contemplated new invasion of France, with which

she had been justly or gratuitously credited, was due to the intervention of Russian diplomacy. Bismarck could never forgive his Russian colleague's attempt at playing the first fiddle in the European concert and at pluming himself with the undeserved laurels of the peacemaker.

Then followed the Russo-Turkish War into which the Russian Government suffered itself to be drawn by the Slavophile movement, supposedly against its better judgment. This circumstance seems to have caused too exaggerated an importance to be attached to Slavophilism as a driving force in Russian politics—although such influence as it actually did exert has certainly been, as events have proved, very much to the detriment of Russia's real interests—and to have helped to set up the spectre of Pan-Slavism under Russian headship as a standing menace to the Central Empires.

Of infinitely wider scope and immeasurably greater importance was Pan-Slavism's counterpart—Pan-Germanism—not only as a political doctrine professed by a limited circle of militant intellectuals and professional militarists, but as a deep-seated race consciousness permeating the whole nation. Strangely enough, this extravagantly exaggerated race feeling was vouchsafed a semblance of justification in the writings of two foreigners, one French and the other English, who both proclaimed the superiority of the Germanic race over all others: the Comte de Gobineau, in his *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853-55), translated into English under the title *Moral and Intellectual Diversity of Races*; and Mr. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, in his remarkable book *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. The latter work was originally written in German by the author, who, although an Englishman of good family, had settled permanently in Vienna. Its appearance in 1901, during my short term of office as Minister to Bavaria, produced in Germany a great sensation, and was naturally hailed with enthusiasm as an admission of German superiority from the pen of a distinguished Englishman who had devoted many years to the study of German culture and civilization. It may have contributed to the development of that particular disease of the "swelled head" with which the German

people have been afflicted ever since the victories achieved in the Franco-Prussian War, which has brought down upon it the dislike and ill-will of all nations, and which has tempted its leaders to risk the adventure of a general European war destined to end in Germany's downfall and ruin.

Mr. Arthur Bullard, in his extremely interesting volume *The Diplomacy of the Great War*, in a chapter headed "Das Deutschtum," sheds some light on the peculiar mental attitude of the German people which manifests itself in the cult of this "Deutschtum," a cult that has, from its very origin at the time of the nation's deepest abasement in the beginning of the nineteenth century, during the Napoleonic Wars, been carefully nursed by the ruling powers, first as a means of rousing the people to a sense of national dignity, then as an indispensable element of force needed to secure the unification of the nation under the Empire and to consolidate the Empire's international position, until it had become a kind of Messianic obsession which was bound to become obnoxious to all other nations.

It seems to me that Mr. Bullard's estimate of the German people's attitude as it was influenced by the cult of the "Deutschtum" is not mistaken when he says :

There have always been Cassandra-like prophets in Germany who preached the virtue, the necessity, the inevitability of war. Few countries have escaped such plagues. But the great mass of the German people and—for more than a generation—the responsible rulers of the Empire have given a deaf ear to such promptings. There is no reason to believe that their faith in their divine mission weakened, or that they had allowed their swords to rust. But they hoped to win without fighting. War was the supreme weapon, the last resort. They were resolved not to unchain it lightly—not till other means had been exhausted.

It can hardly be doubted that, even up to the last moment, such as indeed been the attitude of the civil element in Germany's Government, and of the Sovereign himself. But it was by no means that of the military element, as exemplified by the notorious General Bernhardt, the propounder of the insane doctrine of "world power or downfall." It was plain that, as far as Germany was concerned, the world's peace depended on which of these

two elements would ultimately gain the upper hand in the councils of the German Government. The odds were obviously in favour of the military element, as evidenced by the powerful influence acquired by its most gifted representative, Admiral von Tirpitz, of whom Viscount Haldane, in his very illuminating book *Before the War*, says that he possessed a "General-Staff mind" of a high order. There was one subject, however, in regard to which both the civil element and the "General-Staff mind" were equally in the dark, owing to that inability to understand other people's mentality which is so characteristic of their nation and which has its source in a certain perhaps unconscious and naïve but overweening conceit. That subject was the far-reaching importance of the general feeling of distrust and hostility which the German Government's policy and the vague aspirations of an insufferably pretentious "Deutschtum" had created everywhere toward Germany and her people, a feeling which, after the dogs of war had been recklessly unchained, was to turn from national antipathy to bitter hatred, a hundredfold intensified by the ruthlessness of her mode of warfare, was to array against her almost all mankind and in the end to render impossible any such settlement of the war as the true interests of the whole civilized world would have demanded.

Both sides, it seems to me, had been agreed on one point, namely, on the necessity of finding an issue from the undeniably perilous situation in which Germany found herself between two great military Powers whose combined armies were greater than hers. But from this point their ways had parted. The civil element had been trying to relieve the situation by attempts at reaching friendly understandings with Russia as well as with Great Britain, on the basis of an engagement by each of the contracting parties not to enter or take part in any combination directed against the other. Both these attempts had failed. The failure of the attempt made in regard to Russia may have left behind a particularly smarting sting, inasmuch as Bethmann-Hollweg, the Imperial Chancellor, having announced in the Reichstag that such an understanding had been reached with the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs during the latter's visit to Berlin, Mr. Sazonoff had subse-

quently had it denied in the Russian Press. The military party, on the contrary, had always maintained that force was the only effective remedy. It was my firm belief that in the summer of 1913 an agreement in this sense between the two elements contending for supremacy had been reached in connection with the levy of an extraordinary war impost of a billion marks, and that the outbreak of war was impending in the near future, as I had warned the Council of the Empire in my speech.

A resort to arms having been decided upon, the question necessarily arose how to bring about a cause for rupture of sufficient gravity to rouse the nation to a unanimous determination to fight, without which, under to-day's conditions of warfare, a successful war could never be fought. Conditions, at the moment, were not favourable for artificially creating such a cause. One of the psychological conditions out of which an armed conflict between nations might arise was, indeed, present in the undeniable existence of what Viscount Haldane describes as "a set of colossal suspicions of each other by all the nations concerned." But these suspicions, industriously fostered in all countries by that part of the Press which thrives on sensation and on the cultivation of passions and of strife, were confined to the ruling classes without profoundly affecting the popular masses, whose passions can only be aroused by the stronger emotions of hatred or of fear.

To anyone even superficially acquainted with the political situation in Europe it was, of course, plain that in every one of the leading nations—I say advisedly "in every one" without fear of contradiction—there existed a small group of ambitious statesmen and General Staff officers of all grades whose main preoccupation was the coming war, in the advent of which they were deeply interested politically and professionally, and whose outbreak, therefore, would be extremely welcome to them all. But it was no less evident that not one of these small groups, however influential—not even that which had just succeeded in getting the upper hand in Germany—could afford, without having behind it the unanimous support of the nation, to risk the odium of having taken the initiative in bringing about a war which, owing to the existing system

of the two chains of alliances, was bound to become a general European war.

The support of the German nation's unanimous will to fight could, however, be secured by arousing its fear of being attacked and of being compelled to defend itself on two fronts, an apprehension which in a latent state had naturally been present in the minds of the people since they had realized that the conclusion of the Franco-Russian alliance had placed them, so to speak, between two fires. It became, therefore, necessary to play on this latent fear of the German people by creating the illusion of an immediately impending attack on them by France or by Russia, an effect that could be produced only by the grossest deception practised on the credulity of the nation and its implicit belief in the wisdom of its rulers.

No one could doubt that the French people, however much they might welcome a chance to obtain a *revanche* for their defeat in the Franco-Prussian War and to reconquer their lost provinces, were far too peacefully inclined ever to suffer their rulers to take the initiative in bringing about a general war. The apprehension of an attack from that quarter could, obviously, not be palmed off on even a credulous nation as a serious and immediate danger. Nothing, therefore, remained but to harp on the Russian danger in every possible way, which evidently accounts for the Press campaign against Russia started by the *Koelnische Zeitung*, as mentioned above ; and that is also why General Soukhomlinoff's idle boast, in his published interview, about our readiness not only for a defensive but also for an offensive war, must have been extremely welcome to the German militarists. Nevertheless it was sufficiently unlikely that Russia would really take the initiative in bringing about a settlement by force of arms of the perennial feud between Teuton and Gaul, which, after all, was no concern of hers, an initiative which the French themselves were obviously disinclined to assume.

Another ground had to be found upon which to bring into play the Russian danger, and that ground could only be the latent antagonism between Russia and Austria-Hungary, which was apt at any moment to reach an extremely acute stage on the basis of some complications

in Balkan politics. That is where the danger inherent in our Slavophile policies, to which I had so often called attention, actually did come into play with results fatal to Russia and disastrous to Europe, inasmuch as it was on this ground that the Austro-Russian conflict came to a head and furnished a pretext for the mobilizations, which, unless arrested in time, were bound to lead to the outbreak of the general European war. Why they were not so arrested is a subject to which I shall revert later.

For the moment there seemed to be a lull on the surface of Balkan affairs, and my alarmist forewarnings of an impending crisis appeared to have been, if not baseless, at least premature.

Summer was approaching, and with it came the close of the session of the Council of the Empire. As had been my habit in the preceding years, I solicited and was graciously granted an audience with the Emperor. His Majesty received me at the Imperial villa at Peterhof, on the shore of the Gulf of Finland, in his study overlooking the sea. I had been commanded to present myself at an unusual hour late in the afternoon, from which I concluded that a more than usual lengthy interview was contemplated. In this expectation I was not disappointed, but my hope of being given a chance to approach the subject of the burning political questions of the day was not realized.

The Emperor was manifestly in the cheerful mood of a man who had made up his mind to find diversion from work or cares in a quiet chat on subjects remote from the preoccupations of the hour with a person whom he knew not to be a seeker of office or influence. His Majesty engaged me at once in a conversation on events of days long gone by, on the Japanese War, the peace negotiations at Portsmouth, on the part President Roosevelt, of whom he spoke in the highest terms, had taken in these negotiations with such skill and perfect tact, on the debt of gratitude he owed him for the timely offer of his good offices for bringing about peace. He showed himself greatly interested in all I was able to tell him, not only about the course of the negotiations with which Witte and I had been entrusted, but also about all our doings during our sojourn at the Wentworth Hotel and in New York, and so

on. After about an hour's conversation on these subjects which seemed to have afforded him a welcome diversion from graver thoughts, the Emperor rose to dismiss me, and it occurred to me to ask him whether he remembered a memorandum I had requested Mr. Kokovtseff, the then Prime Minister, to submit to him. He answered that he remembered perfectly well that Kokovtseff had handed him this memorandum, but from the expression of his eyes I knew at once that he had not read it, that my mentioning it had embarrassed him and that he wished the subject to be dropped. Thereupon I ventured to say that a bulky typewritten document was very inconvenient for perusal, and asked whether I might be permitted to present to him a printed copy of it. To this he assented eagerly and most graciously, and told me to send it to him at once through the Minister of the Household or the Grand Marshal of the Court, from which I concluded that the copy I had previously sent him through another high official had never reached him.

Before leaving the Emperor's presence I had time to express to him my profound gratitude for the generous way he had set me right in the eyes of the public when, returned to Russia after the outbreak of the war with Japan, I was generally held to have been guilty of having failed to warn the Government in time of the impending danger of war. The Emperor shook me warmly by the hand, and by a spontaneous impulse I kissed his and he embraced me tenderly and kissed me on the cheek in the hearty Russian way. It was the last time I ever met the unfortunate Sovereign. When the door had closed behind me the aide-de-camp on duty in the ante-room, one of the younger Grand Dukes, may have noticed that I had tears in my eyes.

I had been preparing to leave for Paris to join my family when some private business caused me to delay my departure for a month, so that the fatal news of the assassination at Sarajevo of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his morganatic consort found me still at St. Petersburg. There could no longer be any doubt that the crisis was upon us. I shall not attempt to give a synopsis of the negotiations which led up to the final outbreak of the war

and of which, of course, I have no more knowledge than what everybody has been able to gather from the numerous official publications issued by the Governments concerned, and shall confine myself to relating my personal experiences during the few remaining days before the catastrophe.

It so happened that on the Sunday preceding the fatal 1st of August—that is to say, on the 25th of July—I was dining at the villa of a friend situated on the high road to Peterhof and Krassnoe Selo, where the troops of the guard and of the garrison of the capital always spent the summer months in camp. We were still at dinner, when the servants announced that a regiment of the guards was marching past. We all rushed out to the garden gate and stood there looking at the giant forms of the guardsmen tramping silently on the dusty road in the summer twilight. I shall never forget the sinister impression of impending doom this sight produced on me. We learned that, the night before, the order had been issued to raise the camp immediately and for the troops to return to the capital. The meaning of this order could hardly have been misunderstood. Three days later I was dining at the villa of one of the most popular hostesses on one of the beautiful islands in the estuary of the Neva. Among the guests were the Minister of War and two or three members of the Diplomatic Corps, representatives of allied or friendly Powers. We had barely sat down to our dinner when General Soukhomlinoff was called to the telephone, and when he resumed his seat his neighbour, the charming wife of a prominent General, asked him what the news was. He said that Austria had declared war on Serbia and that the bombardment of Belgrade had begun, adding in French the words I distinctly overheard, sitting opposite his neighbour at table: “*Cette fois nous marcherons*” (This time we shall march).

There could evidently be no doubt whatever about the intentions of our military party. The next morning, the 29th of July, in great anxiety lest some irrevocable decision might be taken in the course of the day, I went to see one of the Ministers, the only really able member of the Cabinet, to learn the latest news and his own views on the situation. I found him in full agreement with me that

the only hope left of our escaping a general war, and that a very slender one, was to limit ourselves to a partial mobilization directed only against Austria-Hungary. He intended to make a determined stand for this point of view in the Council of Ministers which was to be held in the afternoon. I returned to him late in the evening and was happy to learn from his lips that after many vacillations, the military element having been very insistent on a general mobilization, it had been finally decided to order the mobilization of only four military circumscriptions, those of Moscow, Kieff, Odessa, and Kazan; that is to say, a partial mobilization, which might be interpreted as directed solely against Austria-Hungary.¹ An Imperial ukase to that effect, as required by law, appeared in the morning papers the following day, the 30th of July.

Having learned, however, that the General Staff was still trying to obtain an order for a general mobilization, I went at an early hour to interview again my ministerial friend of the day before. He told me that the Prime Minister, Mr. Goremykin, had just gone to Peterhof determined to insist upon no general mobilization being ordered and that he would call me up at three o'clock by telephone as soon as he had learned from the Prime Minister the result of his *démarche*. Punctually at three o'clock the telephone bell rang, and to my immense relief I heard the Minister's voice saying that Goremykin had returned from Peterhof with the Emperor's assurance that no general mobilization would take place. After dinner, however, new doubts began to assail me, and I rushed off again to the Minister's summer residence on one of the Neva Islands. I found him at home and in a hopeful mood, reassuring me in regard to my apprehensions.

While we were talking over some cups of tea the telephone bell rang. The Minister took up the receiver, and I heard him say from time to time, "Yes," and again "Yes" in a gradually lowering voice, until he hung up the receiver with a sigh. He made the sign of the cross and sadly said, "It is all over! The general mobilization has just

¹ But see pp 187-8. This passage is left as it was written by the late Baron Rosen for publication in the *New York Evening Post*.—PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

been ordered, as the Minister of the Interior just told me!"

An hour later, at about ten o'clock, I returned to the club where I had my bachelor quarters and found a number of the members assembled on the terrace waiting for my return with the latest news. When I announced it, one of the members present, a General, asked me whether I was aware of the fact that there was a private wire between the Emperor's study at Peterhof and the official residence of the Minister of War. I said that I supposed that to be the case, but I wanted to know what he meant by his remark. "Well," said he, "I wanted to tell you that half an hour ago the order for a general mobilization was revoked by a telephone message from His Majesty."

I went to bed that night with just a glimmer of hope, only to wake up the next morning, the fatal 31st of July, to learn that the order for a general mobilization had just been issued!

The explanation of these singular proceedings I must reserve for the next chapter.

That same night the German ultimatum was received. It was naturally left without a reply, and the next day, August 1st, at 7 p.m., we learned that war had been declared by Germany.

The die was cast!

CHAPTER XXXIV

Earl Loreburn's views—The situation on July 30, 1914—Russian mobilization—Declaration of war—Feeling in Russia—Attack on German Embassy—Treatment of Poland and Finland—Invasion of East Prussia—Taunenberg—My article for the Associated Press—A letter from Roosevelt.

BEFORE proceeding to supplement the narrative of my personal experiences on that fateful 30th of July with some explanations of the singular occurrences to which that narrative referred, I must quote a few passages from Earl Loreburn's book, *How the War Came*, which throw the necessary light on the situation as it presented itself on that historic date :

The Civil Governments or Managers of Foreign Policy in Europe, under whatever title they be designated, were very heavily to blame for drifting helplessly in a situation of unexampled danger. They all knew—in Berlin, Paris, London, Vienna and St. Petersburg—that the danger lay in one General Staff desiring to forestall the other or fearing to be itself forestalled. This apprehension is clearly expressed throughout the dispatches. Therefore time became all-important. If the diplomatists could not settle soon, the chance of settling at all would probably vanish in a few days. A strong, prompt decision by each State as to the course it proposed to steer and an immediate announcement of that course, where an antagonist was about in ignorance to thwart it, or a friend was about to commit some error which would run counter to it—these surely are necessary in the management of controversial business.

Whether such an announcement as here outlined was intended to be made at St. Petersburg by France or by Great Britain, or by both, I have no means of knowing. Earl Loreburn expresses the view that the Russian Alliance gave France the right to require that Russia should not precipitate war by mobilizing, and that if Russia had not mobilized the settlement which just missed fire would have been completed. (The settlement here alluded to could

only have been meant to be the settlement of the Austro-Russian conflict, as Austria was considered to have been willing to enter into direct negotiations with St. Petersburg.) He further mentions that Mr. Jaurès had been urging his Government to notify Russia that if she mobilized without the consent of France, France would not support her in arms, such a demand being perfectly legitimate, like the demand ultimately made by Germany that Austria must not precipitate war by unreasonable conduct. The question, however, is whether the French Government of the day might not have been precluded from bringing forward such a demand by the secret convention concluded between the French and Russian General Staffs in 1892 and approved by their predecessors in office. The text of Article II of the Convention, as published in 1918 in the French Yellow Book, entitled *L'alliance Franco-Russe*, on page 92, reads as follows :

In the event of the forces of the Triple Alliance, or of one of the Powers composing it, being mobilized [subsequently apparently amended to read : " In case of the Triple Alliance or one of the Powers composing it setting the general mobilization of its forces into operation," p. 99, *ibidem*], France and Russia, at the first news of the event and without any preliminary agreement being necessary, shall mobilize immediately and simultaneously the whole of their forces and move them as nearly as possible to their frontiers.

The meaning of this article would, indeed, imply an affirmative answer to the above question as far as the formal presentation of such a demand would have been concerned. This, nevertheless, would not have stood in the way of a friendly exchange of views on the same lines, which in circumstances of such exceptional gravity would have been but natural between allies threatened by a common danger and anxious to agree upon the best means to avoid it.

Another question then presents itself : whether it would have been possible for Great Britain to say to the French Government at the outset, as Earl Loreburn suggests :

You expect us to help you, but this is no quarrel of yours ; you are being brought into it because of your treaty with Russia. If you like to give Russia a free hand, well and good, but in that event

we will not give Russia a free hand to control our policy as well ; and unless you can restrain Russia from mobilizing till we agree that the necessity for doing so is come, we will not join you in arms. We do not intend to be embroiled by your Ally, to whom we are under no sort of obligation.

The answer to this question would seem to depend on the nature of the understanding arrived at between British and French experts as a result of the " military and naval conversations " which had been authorized to be held, apparently in 1906 or 1907, " to prepare for the contingency of a joint war against Germany, as appears from Sir E. Grey's speech of August 3, 1919, and, consequently, on the extent to which the British Government considered itself as morally committed by the result of these conversations."

Be that as it may, two things stand out in bold relief as a lesson to be deduced from the condition of things which led up to and determined the outbreak of the World War ; they are : the extreme danger to peace and to the welfare of nations lurking in secret alliances, conventions, understandings between rulers, pledging the lives, the fortunes and the honour of their peoples without their knowledge and consent, and the no less formidable danger of the ultimate decision of the question of peace or war being left to the military element ; that is to say, to the element least qualified to deal with problems of such overshadowing moment in a spirit of true statesmanship, because its professional training is necessarily directed, not towards the study of the means of ensuring peace, but toward the elaboration of plans for the better preparation and conduct of prospective wars.

It was, however, this latter contingency that resulted from the course of events. Here again I cannot help quoting from Earl Loreburn's book :

Another source of infinite danger now began to emerge—the progress of military preparations. In the condition of universal distrust which had come over Europe, what men most feared was being caught unprepared and destroyed before they could defend themselves. . . . Till tension is removed nothing can be more certain than that the States which are in danger of attack will begin to get ready. This is precisely what happened. How, when, where, to what extent is obscure. . . . But when the progress has once been commenced, it goes forward progressively faster each day. Those

are wise men who hasten their action and make light of forms, so as to agree on terms before the panic comes and the fate of nations passes into the hands of military men.

These few sentences depict exactly the situation as it presented itself during the last week preceding the outbreak of the war. To complete the picture drawn by Earl Loreburn I quote the following weighty words :

Not a single one of the men who had real power was wise enough and strong enough to arrest the military demon that was about to bring upon us all the most awful catastrophe in human history. And after this war had commenced, though very many of them from motives either of fear or of humanity desired to see it ended, they had so committed themselves to one another or were so distrustful of each other's private intentions that they could not close the conflict for the origin of which they had been themselves responsible. Meanwhile the guiltless peoples were destroyed.

That was the world's tragedy !

When day broke on that fateful 30th of July, 1914, the situation was as follows : The original two conflicts, that between Austria and Serbia, and its sequel, the conflict between Austria and Russia, were susceptible of peaceful settlement, Austria having at the last moment shown a willingness to enter into direct negotiations with St. Petersburg. The adjustment of both these conflicts, once Austria was ready to desist from her arrogant attitude, would have demanded but little time and the catastrophe would have been averted, because there would then no longer have existed any cause whatever for a conflict between Russia and Germany. This happy result might have been achieved by the joint efforts of the diplomacy of all the Powers, not excluding even that of Germany, at the last moment thoroughly alarmed by the imminence of an unparalleled world catastrophe, had not the question of mobilizations suddenly assumed an acute character and, by placing Russia and Germany face to face in a threatening attitude, removed the conflict from the domain of statesmanship to that of exclusively military and strategic considerations where on both sides the influence of the General Staffs was supreme.

In either country, however, a mobilization could only be ordered by a decree signed by the Sovereign himself,

and the ultimate decision of the question of peace or war was, therefore, left in the hands of the two Emperors. That they were both fully aware that mobilization meant war and that in deciding for war they were risking their thrones, their dynasties and the fate of their Empires, can hardly be doubted, as well as that, had they been free agents, their decision would have been in favour of peace. But, although invested with supreme power, they were not free agents; they were both subject to the pressure of the sinister influence behind them, which they were both too weak to resist. The Emperor Nicholas almost said as much in a telegram to the Emperor William, dated July 29th at 1 p.m., in which occurs this pathetic admission (*"The Times" Documentary History of the War*, vol. ii. page 159): "I fear that very soon I shall be forced to take measures which will lead to war." That same night, at 11 p.m., he signed the ukase ordering the mobilization of four military circumscriptions—that is to say, a "partial" mobilization—which was announced to be merely a counter-move to Austria's mobilization.

This measure might not necessarily have led to war with Germany if not followed by a general mobilization, for which, as in every other country as well, some secret preparations had presumably been under way for some time since the situation had obviously become critical in the extreme. It became, therefore, of supreme importance to prevent such general mobilization to be decided upon. With this object in view, the Prime Minister, Goremykin, had gone to Peterhof on the morning of the 30th of July and returned with the Emperor's assurance that no general mobilization would be ordered. On the same day, at 1.20 p.m., the Emperor sent to the Emperor William, in reply to the latter's telegram announcing his readiness to mediate between Russia and Austria, the following message (*"The Times" Documentary History of the War*, vol. ii. page 161):

PETERHOF, July 29th, 1.20 p.m.

I thank you from my heart for your quick reply. I am sending to-night Tatistcheff with instructions. The military measures now taking form were decided upon five days ago and for the reason of defence against the preparations of Austria. I hope with all my heart

that these measures will not influence in any manner your position as mediator, which I appraise very highly. We need your strong pressure upon Austria so that an understanding can be arrived at with us.

(Signed) NICHOLAS.

General Tatistcheff, Military Representative of the Emperor attached to the person of Emperor William, who happened to be on leave at St. Petersburg, was sent for later in the afternoon and was awaiting orders, when the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sazonoff, and the Chief of the General Staff, General Yanouchkevitch, arrived at the Imperial villa at Peterhof and were received by His Majesty. Whatever may have been the arguments brought forward by these ill-omened personages in order to influence the Emperor's decision, the result of their interview with His Majesty was that General Tatistcheff's departure for Berlin was countermanded and general mobilization was ordered to be proceeded with. Of this fatal decision I learned at about 9 p.m. from the lips of the member of the Cabinet who had kindly taken the trouble to keep me informed of the course of events. Two hours later I was told by a General who was in a position to know that the mobilization order had been countermanded by a telephone message from the Emperor to the Minister of War. Had he stood firm by this decision, Russia might have been saved and the world spared the catastrophe which has overwhelmed it. But the Minister of War, General Soukhomlinoff, after consultation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sazonoff, and the Chief of the General Staff, General Yanouchkevitch, succeeded by midnight in extorting from the Emperor his consent to let the mobilization order stand, having represented to His Majesty that the general mobilization, once ordered, could not be stopped for "technical reasons."

The general mobilization, which was bound to lead to war, ordered at a moment when the whole world was overcome by a vague sense of impending doom, when not only Austria but even the German Civil Government had shown symptoms of having come to their senses and when, consequently, a few days' delay might have sufficed to allow of a peaceful settlement being reached—was an act

of unmitigated folly and arrant imbecility if intended as a bluff, for it supplied the military advisers of the German Emperor, who were obviously and unquestionably bent on seizing the moment they thought to be favourable for bringing about the general war for which they had been preparing, with the one pretext needed for a rupture with Russia, with a compelling argument to confound the hesitation of their Sovereign, if such there was, and last, but not least, with the most effective means of deluding the German people into the belief that they were being wantonly attacked and that they were called upon to defend the very existence of their Fatherland.

But if it was meant to be a deliberate provocation, it was an appalling crime, the responsibility for which these three men, Sazonoff, Soukhomlinoff and Yanouchkevitch, must share with the equally guilty advisers of the German Emperor, who caused the Russian mobilization to be answered by an ultimatum and a declaration of war. I prefer to think that it was due to their recklessness, incompetence and groundless belief in the possibility of a prompt and glorious victory, rather than to any thought-out intention. But it was an act that sealed the doom of an Empire—their own Fatherland—and the crushing consciousness of having advised it must be to the two of them who are still alive a punishment more cruel than any which human justice could devise.

In the morning of the 31st of July the general mobilization had begun, and on the same day the Emperor sent the following telegram to the German Emperor (“*The Times*” *Documentary History of the War*, vol. ii. page 132):

I thank you cordially for your mediation, which permits the hope that everything may yet end peaceably. It is technically impossible to discontinue our military preparations, which have been made necessary by the Austrian mobilization. It is far from us to want war. As long as the negotiations between Austria and Serbia continue my troops will undertake no provocative action. I give you my solemn word thereon. I confide with all my faith in the grace of God, and I hope for the success of your mediation in Vienna for the welfare of our countries and the peace of Europe.

Your cordially devoted

(Signed) NICHOLAS.

But it was too late. Germany's ultimatum was already

on its way to St. Petersburg. Inexorable Fate was on the march and no human power could arrest it.

The declaration of war became known on August 1st, between seven and eight o'clock in the evening. The next day there was considerable excitement, natural under the circumstances. The people felt that they were being suddenly and wantonly attacked by a hitherto friendly nation with whom they had always been living in peace and amity. Of the complicated causes that had led up to this unexpected result they—I mean, of course, the popular masses—could not have any conception. The idea, which was spread and propagated by the Press, not only in Russia, but abroad as well, and had become a kind of political axiom, that Russia, as a Slav Power (I would observe here in parenthesis that Russia is no more and no less a Slav Power than Great Britain is a Teuton Power as far as race affinity is concerned), was bound to intervene in the conflict between Austria and Serbia and to shield the latter from the consequences of her policy of a “Greater Serbia” at the expense of Austria—was, although widely entertained by our “Intelligentsia,” quite beyond the understanding of the popular masses.

If, as was said to have been the case, the Minister of Foreign Affairs had really represented to the Emperor that, unless he yielded to the popular demand and unsheathed the sword in Serbia's behalf, he would run the risk of a revolution and perhaps the loss of his throne, it could only have been under the influence of the same delusion which swayed the minds of the majority of our intellectuals and had its origin in that fatal gulf separating the educated classes from the enormous bulk of the nation.

This same remark applies with no less force to the relation of the educated classes to the war, which, by a majority of them, was indeed hailed—and for various reasons—with a certain amount of enthusiasm sufficient to deceive even perspicacious foreign observers—such, for instance, as Mr. E. H. Wilcox—into the belief that the war with Germany was popular in the broadest and deepest sense, and to make him say, in his *Russia's Ruin*: “The very air was electrified with patriotism and one could feel its stimulating infection everywhere.”

In some respect this impression correctly reflected the atmosphere which at first prevailed in the capital and other large centres of population containing considerable agglomerations of the more or less politically "conscious" factory labourers. But to believe that the immense mass of the population of the Empire—let alone the peasantry which had to furnish the bulk of the reserve forces, mobilized and torn from their labours in the middle of the harvest season—would be to any appreciable extent affected by such warlike enthusiasm, could only betoken a profoundly erroneous interpretation of the real feelings of the people, quite comprehensible in a foreign visitor naturally inclined, in time of war, to see everywhere symptoms of the disposition which he hoped to find in the population of an allied country, but quite inexcusable in Russian intellectuals, who ought to have known better, and who were but too prone to foster similar illusions which largely prevailed in allied countries.

I feel bound to insist on this point, because this misinterpretation of the real feelings of the Russian people, not only by our Allies, but also by our own politicians, has had consequences of incalculable importance—a subject to which I shall revert later—and has in the end led to an inevitable disillusionment which has provoked in allied countries, among the unthinking, an outburst of unbounded vituperation and the vilest accusations against a great and generous nation, when it was found that the Russian people, after having borne losses surpassing those of any other of the allied countries, were no longer willing to shed their blood for a cause which they never felt, nor ever had any reason to feel, to be theirs.

That this was attributed to the influence of German propaganda and German gold was perhaps natural on the part of Allied war propaganda, interested in exciting by every means indignation against the proceedings and warfare practices of the enemy; but that Russians abroad should have been found eager to join in such an outcry, which indeed means nothing less than the grossest ignominy heaped, not on the enemy, but on the Russian nation, is a matter of profound humiliation to those Russians who do not believe in the desirability of seeking to ingratiate them-

selves with our former Allies by reviling their own people.

As a matter of fact, the war was welcomed, just as any other war would have been, by the military element, especially the younger generation, dreaming of glory and promotion to be won on the battlefield—a perfectly natural and, as long as war is considered to be a necessity in the life of nations, a not only laudable but most desirable frame of mind. Among the higher ranks of the Army, in spite of official optimism, a less cheerful disposition seemed to prevail. They could not but be aware of the various defects of our military organization, the actual insufficiency of our preparations, and the colossal difficulties of every kind which would be entailed in the conduct of a war on the gigantic scale this war was bound to assume.

Among the Duma leaders and politicians the war was apparently very popular; at least there was no lack of most enthusiastic patriotic demonstrations. The same may be said of the "Intelligentsia" as a whole. Those who understood what a tragedy the war really meant for Russia and were bold enough to say so were necessarily very few, although the number of those who in their innermost hearts thought so cannot have been small. The revolutionary "Intelligentsia" alone had any reason to rejoice, for their opportunity had come at last.

All efforts to arouse in the popular masses the spirit of hate as a moving force in the war, although they succeeded in provoking here and there outbursts of disorder and violence to which many thousands of perfectly innocent people fell victims, utterly failed in their object, just as they had been unsuccessful in the war with Japan, and for the same reason. The favourite and propagandist legend of the inveterate hatred of the Russian people toward Germany and Germans had no basis in fact. In the immense expanse of Russia proper the overwhelming majority of the people never had, nor could have had, any personal contact with Germany and Germans, nor had, perhaps, ever set their eyes on a live representative of that supposedly hated race. And then, the spirit of hatred toward foreigners as such is entirely absent in the mental and moral make-up of the Russian people. This, indeed, is

one of the most attractive traits of the Russian national character, to which all foreigners who have ever lived in Russia have always been willing to render justice. The conception of the hatred and "loathing" of this or that nation, even of a nation with which one is at war, as a requisite of patriotism, is a conception quite alien to the mentality of the Russian people, and, one should think, to that of the so-called "plain people" in all countries as well, just as it is notoriously absent in the minds of the soldiers who face each other in the trenches and in deadly combat.

This conception of patriotism seems to be everywhere confined mostly to the educated middle classes, and its peculiarity is that it seems to inspire the minds of people with greater virulence the farther they are from the fighting line. But what is truly astonishing is that the ruling classes when making ready for the World War did not reflect, in preparing to send forth millions upon millions of the "plain people" of their countries to a war that was obviously bound to demand holocausts of unheard-of dimensions, that a day might come when these same plain people would awaken to a realization of the fact that they, the "plain people," had really no quarrel with the "plain people" in the enemy camp and might conclude therefrom that the real enemy was not the enemy they had to face in the trenches, but that the real enemy were their own rulers who had sent them to the slaughter.

That is exactly what has happened in Russia, and that is what our experience in the Japanese War and its aftermath should have taught our rulers to foresee and guard against at any cost, and most certainly at the cost of such a diplomatic "defeat" as would have been implied in an abstention from becoming mixed up in the conflict between Serbia and Austria. For their failure to have done so tens of thousands of brave officers have had to pay with their lives, often under tortures of unspeakable cruelty, hundreds of thousands of the deluded "Intelligentzia"—some with their lives and most of them with utter ruin, or exile as unwelcome guests in foreign lands, often in conditions of pitiable destitution, and Russia herself with abasement, dismemberment and total destruction of her political and

social fabric, from which it will take her, possibly, generations to recover.

Ominous symptoms of an incipient disorganization of the administrative apparatus were noticeable from the very beginning. Two or three days after the outbreak of the war a crowd of rowdies invaded the building of the German Embassy, murdered the Chancery servant who had been left in the house to guard the furniture and effects, the private property of the Ambassador, and occupied itself during an hour or so with destroying or throwing out of the windows all the movable objects they could lay their hands on. The club house where I was living stood in the same street, and being informed by the servants that an attack on the German Embassy by a riotous crowd was in progress, I went with a couple of friends—among them the representative of a neutral Power—just to see what was going on. The sight that met our eyes was not one to be proud of. A considerable crowd had collected in front of the Embassy, composed of the most heterogeneous elements, among them some decent people, mere onlookers like ourselves, but the majority a howling mob of such sinister figures as usually appear on the surface in large towns whenever rioting is in the air. An officer of police and a couple of policemen were calmly looking on while pieces of furniture, crockery, glassware, etc., were flying in the air and coming down on the pavement with a crash, which was greeted with howls of delight by the crowd. Nothing evidently had been done to prevent the possibility of a crowd of rowdies breaking into a building of which the Embassy of the United States had officially taken charge and which, therefore, was placed under the protection of international law. Nothing had been done to put an end to the disgraceful outrage which was being committed under the very eyes of the police; no arrests were made; no one was ever punished or even prosecuted for the murder of the German Chancery servant.

Having satisfied its lust of destruction, the crowd moved on in the direction of the Austro-Hungarian Embassy, situated at some considerable distance in another part of the town. But there, Austria not yet having declared war and the Ambassador and his Staff still being present,

necessary precautions for their protection had been taken, and the riotous crowd found all approaches to the Embassy building barred by troops.

The failure to have taken similar steps for the protection of the German Embassy building, or, at all events, to have immediately put a stop to its contents being looted and destroyed, disclosed either the incapacity or the pusillanimity of the responsible authorities, who could only have been either unwilling or else afraid to interfere with the mob, engaged in what may have been considered to have been a manifestation of patriotic rage. It seemed to me that in deliberately allowing the dregs of the populace to have their way on this occasion the Government were most imprudently entering upon a course fraught with the gravest danger and that they were already beginning to let the reins of power slip through their fingers. This disgraceful episode, although of no importance at the time, proved, indeed, a mild foretaste of what was to come two years and a half later.

There was, undoubtedly, but little hope that the administrative apparatus of the Empire would prove capable of satisfying the almost unlimited demands which the conduct of a war on the expected scale was bound to make on its efficiency, although the mobilization of the armies had been effected with the most commendable precision and celerity—a proof, by the way, of the fact that active preparations had been secretly under way—as presumably they had been in every other country—for some considerable time before the actual outbreak of hostilities. But the most disquieting feature of the state of affairs was the evident non-comprehension by the ruling powers of the political demands, the satisfaction of which the situation rendered not only necessary but extremely urgent indeed. I mean, of course, the absolute necessity of an immediate and complete reversal of the policy theretofore pursued in regard to our outlying dominions, Poland and Finland.

The partition of Poland had unquestionably been a crime—as the Emperor Paul himself is said to have admitted, although it had been committed by his own mother. But in committing this crime Russia had had two accomplices, Prussia and Austria, and she could

remain in the tranquil enjoyment of the fruits of the crime only so long as she avoided falling out with her accomplices. Once, however, the rupture with these two Powers had taken place, there was only one rational policy she could adopt, and that was to make reparation as fully as lay in her power by renouncing her share in the spoliation of a gallant and generous nation, whose goodwill and support in the coming titanic contest was of inestimable value to her. This consideration seemed to have commended itself to the attention of the Government and to have met at least with a partial approval. It was decided that something had to be done to conciliate the Polish people. This something, however, turned out to be an act than which hardly anything more illogical, senseless and unsatisfactory, to Poles as well as to Russians, could have been devised. It took the shape of a declamatory and dramatic proclamation addressed to the Poles by the Grand Duke Nicholas, Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armies, a translation of the text of which I take the liberty of quoting here from Mr. F. S. Whitton's *A History of Poland* :

Poles ! The hour has come when the dream of your fathers and forefathers will at length be realized. A century and a half ago the living body of Poland was torn in pieces, but her soul has not perished. She lives in the hope that the time will come for the resurrection of the Polish nation and its fraternal union with all Russia. The Russian armies bring you the glad tidings of this union. May the frontiers which have divided the Polish people be broken down. May it once more be united under the sceptre of the Russian Emperor. Under this sceptre Poland will come together, free in faith, in language and in self-government. One thing Russia expects of you : an equal consideration for the rights of nations with which history has linked you. With open heart, with hand fraternally outstretched, great Russia comes to you. She believes that the sword has not rusted which overthrew the foe at Tannenberg. From the shores of the Pacific Ocean to the Polar Sea the Russian war-hosts are in motion. The morning star of a new life is rising for Poland. May there shine resplendent in the dawn the Sign of the Cross, the symbol of the Passion and Resurrection of nations.

I can best describe the impression the proclamation produced on the Poles by repeating what one of my Polish friends told me on the morning it had appeared in the papers of the capital : " I read it with tears of emotion, but I do

not believe a single word of it." Another Polish gentleman was reported to have said that he had taken it at first for an apocryphal production concocted by some Russian revolutionists! Moreover, it was said—and I have every reason to believe the story to be true—that simultaneously with the issue of the proclamations from Headquarters of the Armies the Russian governors of the Polish provinces had been confidentially warned by the Minister of the Interior that it was merely an act of political strategy!

On the other hand, it was, to say the least, inopportune, if not imprudent, to intimate to the Russian people that their old feud with the Poles was to be settled at last by their shedding their blood for the creation of a greater Poland, not to mention the imprudence of the implied promise of the conquest of provinces in the possession of still unconquered enemies.

Incidentally I would observe that, according to rumour, Army Headquarters had not had anything to do with the production of this amazing document, whose inspiration was said to have been due to the political insight of a "statesman," and its empty but grandiloquent verbiage to the gifted pen of some one of his subordinates.

And yet how clearly indicated was the obvious course that should have been adopted: the restoration, under the constitution of 1815, of the autonomous Kingdom of Poland, united to Russia solely in the person of the Sovereign—a solution of the Polish problem which was entirely within the power of Russia, could have been effected immediately, would have dealt a most serious moral blow to both Prussia and Austria, and would have given to the Polish nation a real satisfaction instead of shadowy promises whose realization was entirely dependent on the fortune of arms. I have no doubt that, had the Emperor Nicholas, as soon as war broke out, immediately gone to Warsaw to be crowned as constitutional King of Poland, dismissed the whole Russian administration and appointed a Polish Ministry, he would have evoked an unbounded enthusiasm and would have won the most loyal devotion of the Polish people.

Second only to Poland in strategic importance was the

Grand Duchy of Finland, where, no less than in Poland, a complete reversal of the policy theretofore pursued by the Imperial Government was imperatively demanded, since this outlying dominion, whose border was no farther removed from the capital of the Empire than some twenty miles, would be manifestly exposed to the imminent danger of an invasion by the enemy.

Two measures should have been taken at once: the immediate repeal of the laws passed by the Imperial Legislature in violation of the Finnish constitution and the removal of the extremely unpopular Governor-General, a certain General Seyn, who enjoyed no social prestige whatever and seemed to be entirely unfit for the part of representative of the Sovereign in a constitutionally governed country. He should have been replaced by a man of unassailable social position and very high military rank. The latter qualification would have been of the greatest importance, because the requirements of the defence of the Empire necessitated the occupation of Finland by large forces, military as well as naval, and therefore the establishment of some kind of arbitrary military rule which it would have been of supreme importance to confine within the bounds of reason—a task that only a Governor-General of very high military rank and in high favour at Court could hope to accomplish successfully.

Nothing of the kind, however, was done, nor seems to have been even thought of. On the contrary, the generally execrated rule of Governor-General Seyn was simply reinforced by the presence of military commanders inclined to treat Finland almost in as arbitrary and highhanded a way as they would have treated a conquered country. The effect on the feelings and disposition of the population may be imagined.

Nor was Russia herself treated by her ruling powers with any more statesmanlike wisdom. At a time when the most extensive and cruel sacrifices were being demanded of the peasantry, who had to furnish some 80 per cent. or more of the required cannon fodder in a cause for which they had not the faintest understanding, let alone sympathy—whatever war propaganda may have succeeded in inducing the gullible public to believe—the peasantry who

ever since the Japanese War had been belaboured by the ubiquitous propaganda of the Social-Revolutionaries, the same "dastardly" terrorists who later, masquerading as "loyal" Russian war patriots, were to become "the main hope of the Allies—at a time when it was supremely important to prevent the "bourgeois" parties from joining hands with those who were working for the overthrow of the Government, as they ultimately did, nothing whatever was done to satisfy their moderate and reasonable demands. On the contrary, obscurantist reaction became ever more blatantly arrogant. Also the supremacy of the military element, more or less unavoidable in time of war, was being exercised with ever-growing arbitrariness and recklessness, helping to throw the Government machinery out of gear and by cultivating a sort of mild anarchy on top was paving the way for the advent of anarchy from below.

The outlook did not seem to be a cheerful one. Far from it indeed. But events seemed at first to belie the worst of their apprehensions. Our successful invasion of East Prussia was considered by those who were dreaming of a victorious march on Berlin to be heralding a speedy termination of the war, although the success was mainly due to the fact that our invading army had encountered only feeble resistance by inferior German troops and insufficient in number—a fact which, by the way, contradicts flatly one of the arguments said to have been used by General Soukhomlinoff in urging the Emperor to order a general mobilization, namely, that the Germans had in readiness on our frontier great masses of troops prepared to forestall our mobilization by an instant invasion of our territory the moment war would have been declared. It ended, however, in the disastrous defeat of our troops at Tannenberg, the same place where in 1410 the Poles had gained their great victory over the Teutonic Knights to which the Grand Duke Nicholas's proclamation had referred in such pompous terms.

Nevertheless our at first victorious invasion of East Prussia had served its purpose in having compelled the Germans to withdraw sufficient troops from their western front to enable the French to gain their victory on the

Marne, which practically decided the issue of the war by demonstrating the impossibility of France being overwhelmed by a lightning blow, as originally planned by the German General Staff.

Furthermore, our defeat at Tannenberg was compensated by the brilliant victory which crowned our arms in Galicia. In September the occupation of Lemberg, the Galician capital, took place and was followed by the fall of the fortress of Przemyśl. Finally, in October the Germans were completely repulsed from Warsaw.

In spite of the more or less favourable aspect of the military situation on both fronts, I never wavered in my profound conviction that the war, unless arrested before it was too late, was bound to end in the ruin of Russia, and I therefore began to revolve in my mind various plans how the lull in military operations coincident with the winter season, as well as the comparatively satisfactory military situation, could be taken advantage of for the initiation of negotiations looking to the conclusion of a general peace. Having given the subject much thought and having incidentally ascertained the views of the very able and experienced representative of one of the most important neutral Powers, whose views I found to be concurrent with mine, I was anxious to lay them before the American public, because I was convinced from the beginning that this war could only be brought to an end by the intervention and under the auspices of the United States. The occasion to do so presented itself at the end of the year when I received a letter from an old and influential friend in New York, who suggested that I should write an article on the situation for one of the leading magazines. I replied that I felt some diffidence about following up his suggestion, having never tried my hand at writing for the Press, but that I would be glad to give an interview to the representative of the Associated Press. This interview took place on January 1, 1915, and the following is the text which I dictated to him and which he sent by telegraph to the London office of the Associated Press. Whether it was ever printed in any American newspaper I have not been able to ascertain, and I therefore feel no compunction about reproducing it here :

As current events develop one realizes, if one goes to the bottom of things, that the true significance of the present general war between the European Powers lies not only in the determined resistance to the German aim of establishing an overlordship of the world through force of arms, but also in the revolt of mankind against the idea that might goes before right. This is why the sympathy of the world seems to be on the side of the Allies.

No one dreams of begrudging the German people the "place in the sun" that is theirs by birthright among the great nations on a footing of equality; but the world will never submit to the hegemony of the "mailed fist." German militarism has shown its true colours in a way and by deeds which have aroused, the world over, feelings against the German people that it will take them long years to live down.

That the cause of right, of the sacredness of treaties and of the integrity and independence of the smaller Powers, for which we are fighting, must and will prevail in the end, I consider to be a moral certainty.

At the present moment the rulers of Germany must already fully realize from the march of events that their original plan of first crushing France and then dealing a death-blow to Russia has totally and irretrievably failed, and that their dream of establishing by this means a German overlordship of the world has come to naught.

I believe that the day will come when the German people will realize that, instead of fighting, as they have been deluded into believing, for the safety and very existence of their country, which nobody thought of attacking, they are shedding the blood of their sons, ruining their prosperity and wasting their substance for nothing but a wild dream of unbridled ambition and megalomania that could never become a reality. That day the German people will make a day of reckoning with the militarism which has inflicted on them the misery of this terrible war. But that day may still be far in the future.

No one doubts the patriotism of the Germans or their determination to fight as long as their resources will last. Still, the amount of suffering which this war entails not only on the belligerents but also on the rest of the civilized world, is bound to grow from month to month as the war continues. Therefore it would seem to be to the interest of all concerned, and most of all perhaps of the German people themselves, to bring the war to a conclusion as soon as possible. The surest way of reaching such a result would be to bring about a general coalition such as crushed the power of the first Napoleon, still leaving France intact and an honoured member of the family of nations. Failing this, however, a league of neutrals, especially if headed by the United States, might bring to bear upon Germany moral pressure sufficient to make her realize the futility of continuing a struggle that could certainly never lead to a realization of her ambitions.

The attitude of Germany toward treaties such as the treaty

guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium, which her foremost statesman in his last interview with the British Ambassador characterized as merely "a scrap of paper," her systematically inhuman and ruthless manner of conducting the war, constitute a standing menace to small Powers, like the Netherlands, Switzerland and Denmark, to whom the cruel fate of heroic Belgium affords a warning of what they may expect should Germany at any time consider it to her interest to invade any of them. They would, therefore, probably be among the first to join such a league in an attempt, if not to bring about the termination of the war, at least to mitigate its accompanying horrors.

A formal ground for the intervention of neutrals could be easily found in the well-established fact of the breach by Germany of most of the stipulations of The Hague Convention in regard to the conduct of war, to which she was herself a party. The right of all or any of the signatory Powers to protest against such breach of the said stipulations could certainly not be questioned.

The portentous and calamitous events we are witnessing should, it seems, impress civilized mankind with the necessity of organizing the life of the community of nations upon a different basis, designed so as to preclude the possibility of any one Power automatically involving almost all the others in a catastrophe such as Germany's overweening ambition has brought upon the civilized world. It can hardly be denied that the much-vaunted equilibrium based on the grouping of the Great Powers of Europe into two irreconcilably hostile camps has lamentably failed to do so. Instead of being, as was claimed for it, the surest safeguard of the peace of Europe, it has proved the cause of constant emulation between the two opposing groups of Powers in ever-growing formidable armaments, and has finally led to one of the Powers concerned resorting to the criminal folly of a preventive war.

To devise a plan of safeguarding the civilized world against the recurrence of a catastrophe such as the present one will, after the conclusion of peace, become the task and should not prove to be beyond the limits of the competence of true statesmanship.

Remembering the leading part Colonel Roosevelt as President of the United States had taken by his timely and generous offer of mediation in bringing about peace between Russia and Japan, and thinking that this interview might perhaps interest him, I took the liberty of enclosing a copy of it in a letter to him, to which he replied by a letter, from which I have been very kindly permitted to extract the following for publication in this chapter of my reminiscences :

Your letter has just come and your interview. I am in hearty accord with all that you say. I wish to Heaven I were President at this moment. That won't strike you, I know, as an expression of

personal ambition. I would be quite willing to accept the Presidency now with a guarantee of being removed from it the very instant I had succeeded in doing what I started to accomplish ; and the first thing I would like to do, aside from the subordinate incident of aiding civilization and decency in Mexico, would be to interfere in the World War on the side of justice and honesty by exactly such a league as you mention.

I do not believe in neutrality between right and wrong. I believe in justice. . . . Meanwhile, whatever I can do by tongue and pen will be done along exactly the lines indicated in your letter and your interview.

With all good wishes, faithfully yours,

(Signed) THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

CHAPTER XXXV

The question of mobilization—War passions—War propaganda—Declaration of London—Opportunity for a League of Neutrals—Disorganization in Russia—The Tsar and a separate peace—Rasputin—The Grand Duke Nicholas—The “ Progressive Bloc.”

IN a preceding chapter I related my personal experiences on that fateful Thursday, July 30, 1914, when the question of peace or war was hanging in the balance, to be ultimately decided at midnight by the Emperor's reluctant consent to the general mobilization, which meant war. In so doing I had no diary or notes of any kind to rely on and nothing to aid me except these two dates, which were indelibly engraved on my memory as the epitaph on the gravestone of my country—July 29 and July 30, 1914. For this reason my account of what I had learned on the evening of July 29th in regard to the decision of the mobilization question was not quite exact, inasmuch as I learned of the decision in favour of the partial mobilization only on the morning of the 30th from the Imperial ukase to that effect printed in the papers.¹ It so happens that I am enabled to refer for the elucidation of this circumstance to documentary evidence which has just come into my possession. An elucidation of this circumstance is of some importance, as it will show how great were the vacillations which preceded the ultimate fatal decision and how great was the unfortunate Emperor's reluctance to give his consent to a measure the incalculable consequences of which, apprehended by some of his faithful subjects, may have been instinctively grasped by a Sovereign overwhelmed with the sense of his appalling responsibility before his country and his people. This documentary evidence, in the shape of a letter written by myself at 2 p.m. on July

¹ PUBLISHER'S NOTE : See p. 164.

30, 1914, and addressed to my wife in Paris, was received there on August 19th, as marked by the stamp of the Paris post office, was delivered to the caretaker of our apartment after the departure of my family for Russia, and reaches me now together with some indifferent mail matter which had accumulated there in our absence. The following is a translation from the Russian original of this letter—one of a series of numbered daily short communications I was in the habit of addressing to my wife when separated from my family :

No. 163.

ST. PETERSBURG,

Thursday, 17/30th of July, 1914, 2 p.m.

DEAREST,

I received yesterday your letter of Sunday, and to-day that of Monday. I see that you are calm and not frightened, thank God. But affairs have taken a more than critical turn. Yesterday there were vacillations: a partial mobilization or a general one. I was the whole day in telephonic communication with X. (a member of the Cabinet) and have been to see him three times at his summer residence. I returned from my last visit to him at midnight, having learned that the general mobilization had been decided upon. This morning I see from the papers that a partial mobilization only has been ordered. This, of course, is a little better, but I am afraid that it will nevertheless be considered a direct challenge and that Germany will to-morrow order a general mobilization, an example which will immediately be followed by France. Whether hereafter negotiations will still be possible is very doubtful. But that is our only hope. I am working indefatigably here in that direction, and Y. at Peterhof. I have already had an interview to-day with X., and Y. has gone to Peterhof. What a calamity that we should have such Ministers as Soukhomlinoff and Sazonoff! *Des gens au cœur léger!* (Light-hearted men). It seems incredible that during all the crisis, which began with the assassination of Francis Ferdinand, our, albeit sorry and incapable, Ambassador should have been absent from Berlin. He returned there but yesterday. At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs they apparently had no suspicion of the plans of Austria and had no information in regard to the intentions and the frame of mind of Berlin! All this is monstrous light-headedness and incompetence. Our poor, unfortunate country! At such a truly tragic historical moment, this is the kind of servants upon whom has to rely the best of Sovereigns, with all his soul devoted to his country and his people! I cannot help worrying about you. But your fortitude and brave spirit, which never leave you in critical moments, are a great consolation to me. God bless you. I cannot decide anything to-day. There is still a faint glimmer of hope that Russia and Europe may be spared this catastrophe.

Ever yours,

R.

For obvious reasons I have indicated only by the letters X. and Y. the persons referred to in the body of the letter, but I would mention incidentally that one of them was a Minister of State and the other a distinguished General, and that their names were purely Russian, as was the true Russian patriotism which animated them in their, alas! fruitless endeavours to avert the coming catastrophe.

During August and September there was a constant stream of Russian travellers returning, mostly by way of Denmark, Sweden and Finland, from Germany, where they had been surprised at the various resorts and watering-places by the declaration of war. Most of them had to complain of all sorts of insults, maltreatment and manifestations of hatred heaped upon them by the populace—all of which went to show how well the Government had succeeded in poisoning the popular mind with the idea that Russia was wantonly attacking Germany and, in conjunction with France, was bent on her destruction. The Emperor William himself, it was said, had not scrupled, in haranguing a crowd from the balcony of his palace, to accuse the Emperor Nicholas of treachery, waving in the faces of the maddened multitude the "scrap of paper" representing the Treaty of Bjorkoe, bearing the Emperor's signature and afterwards denounced by him. The violence of the hatred against Russia seemed to have somewhat abated when, after the British declaration of war, "hymns of hate" and "Gott strafe England" became the order of the day. The ever-smouldering hatred against the hereditary enemy—France—needed, of course, no special effort to be made to burst into flame.

Thus it was that the strongest passions that can move the soul of a people—the passions of hatred and of fear—were brought into play and caused the youth of the country to rush into battle with frantic enthusiasm for what they believed to be the salvation of the Fatherland from threatened destruction. On the other hand, among the stay-at-home plain people, according to the accounts of many fugitive Russians who had fled from Germany after the outbreak of the war, a widespread panicky feeling seemed to prevail, manifesting itself in the most absurd "spy" mania, and in such fantastic rumours as, for instance, the legend of the phantom automobile carrying twenty million francs in

gold from Paris to St. Petersburg through the heart of Germany.

Both these elements of hatred and of fear were absent in Russia. The regular Army marched to the front, obeying the orders of the Tsar, gaily and full of fighting spirit, as was to be expected from a body of young men to whom war against any enemy whatever meant relief from the drudgery of barrack life and held out the promise of all the excitement and the glory of a victorious campaign. But the inarticulate bulk of the nation, traditionally submissive to the will of the Tsar, accepted the war as an infliction sent down by Providence which had to be borne in patience and resignation.

The war was hailed with satisfaction only by part of the "Intelligentsia"—perhaps the largest part—and her leaders, the same "Intelligentsia" who had rightly been opposed to the war in the Far East, and who now expected as a result of the war in Europe, whatever its ultimate issue, the end of autocracy and their own advent to power with the favour and support of Allied opinion and diplomacy. The Duma leaders and their following, including our official diplomacy, were flattered by being admitted on toleration to the society of their "betters" and by being condescendingly treated as real "statesmen," never suspecting the true reason why they were being made so much of and that an alliance and *entente* with backward Russia—at heart partly feared, partly hated and looked down upon as semi-barbarous—could only have been sought by Powers standing on a higher plane of culture and civilization for the purpose and in the hope of securing, in case of need, an inexhaustible supply of cannon fodder in the shape of the poor, inarticulate "Moujik"; and never suspecting either that a day might come when the same "Moujik" would rebel against the part assigned to him by his "betters," the bourgeoisie and "Intelligentsia," and would wreak on them his wrath and vengeance with relentless fury and unspeakable cruelty.

The only ones who had a real reason to rejoice over the outbreak of the war were the revolutionaries of every brand, Social-Revolutionaries, Social-Democrats, Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, for their opportunity to wreck the Empire had come.

The work of the war propaganda, before Allied assistance

made its appearance, was at first carried on by the Russian Press on indigenous lines, necessarily with patriotic attacks on Germany and Germans, but—to its credit be it said—as a rule without the application of opprobrious terms to the enemy and with harping on such slogans as “war to end war”—a brilliant idea quite on a par with other slogans which later on became popular, such as “peace offensive,” “premature peace,” or “defeatism” as applied to the views of those who were anxious to prevent the defeat of their country before it became too late. Practical war propaganda manifested itself mainly in occasional mob attacks on shops owned by Germans or people with German names and in persecutions by the military authorities of estate-owners in the Baltic Provinces of Russian nationality dating back a couple of centuries, but of German origin, whose sons almost without exception were shedding their blood at the front for their common country. Some of these unfortunate landowners, guilty of possessing in the grounds of their mansions cemented tennis courts, which were declared to have been traitorously prepared as platforms for heavy enemy artillery (an alarming symptom of war-madness said to have been observed in isolated cases even in more favoured countries such as Great Britain and America), had been without further ado shipped off with their families to Siberia. Of the treatment meted out by the military authorities under the influence of spy mania to the Jewish population in Poland and Lithuania, especially after the retreat of our armies had begun, I prefer not to speak. It is a page in our history of which every patriot who has at heart the honour of his country must be deeply ashamed.

As to our Government—that is to say, our Civil Government—I was decidedly under the impression that from the very moment of the unexpected outbreak of the war, which they had shown themselves incompetent to prevent, they had begun to lose their bearings, and between the ever-growing arrogance and interference in State affairs of the military element, and on the other hand the ever-threatening revolution, were incapable of dealing effectually with the increasingly chaotic state of affairs brought about by the war.

The conduct of the foreign policy of the country was in the hands of a very honourable man, whose incredible

self-sufficiency, however, joined to glaring incompetence, rendered his occupancy of the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs a disastrous calamity for Russia and was one of the main contributory causes of her downfall. Nothing, for instance, but the incompetence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs could have explained the participation of Russia in this Declaration, signed in London on September 5, 1914, by Sir E. Grey and the Ambassadors of France and Russia, to wit :

"The undersigned, duly authorized thereto by their respective Governments, hereby declare as follows :

"The British, French and Russian Governments mutually engage not to conclude peace separately during the present war.

"The three Governments agree that when terms of peace come to be discussed no one of the Allies will demand conditions of peace without the previous agreement of each of the other Allies."

Comments on the second article of this Declaration I must reserve for a later chapter when I shall have reached in my narrative the point where the question of the timeliness of entering upon the discussion of possible terms of a general peace should have been raised by Russia. For the present I must confine myself to the elucidation of the obligation undertaken by Russia, inasmuch as it is covered by the first article of the Declaration. In this connection I have to point out that practically identical stipulations were contained :

(1) In Article V of the Secret Convention concluded by the Chiefs of the French and Russian General Staffs in August 1892, and subsequently endorsed by an exchange of ministerial notes between the two Governments, which, as far as can be ascertained from the secret documents hitherto published, was considered as taking the place of a formal Treaty of Alliance ; this article reading, "France and Russia will not conclude peace separately."

(2) In Article II of the Treaty of Bjorkoe, concluded in 1895 between the Emperors William and Nicholas, subsequently denounced by the latter, by which the two Sovereigns bound themselves, "not to conclude a separate peace with any enemy whatever."

I have already commented on the latter transaction in Chapter XXVI of these reminiscences.

Did it ever occur to our Minister of Foreign Affairs to ask himself what could have been the object of both France and Germany, two Powers irreconcilably hostile to one another, in seeking to bind Russia to a similar engagement? Did it never occur to him that each one of these Powers had obviously sought to make Russia subservient to its own policy and interest in the prospective war they were both looking forward to, in which the participation of Russia on either side was essential to that side's success, whilst Russia's sole and paramount interest was to avoid being drawn into the war, which sooner or later was bound to be the outcome of the perennial feud between them? Did it never occur to him that by entering into the agreement covered by the Declaration of London, with two Powers at once mightier and standing on a much higher plane of civilization, Russia was placing herself in a position of inferiority in regard to them similar to that of Austria-Hungary and even Turkey in regard to the German Empire? Or was he sharing the naïve illusion of that distinguished member of the Duma who expressed to me his great admiration of Mr. Sazonoff's skilful statesmanship in having created a "conjuncture" which brought the two foremost civilized Powers of Europe to the side of Russia in the Great War? And was he quite unconscious of the part Russia was really being made to play in that "conjuncture" by those who now, since she has long ago ceased to be available as a useful auxiliary, appear to see their interest in her dismemberment?

However that may have been, the inexorable logic of events must have dispelled any illusions he may have entertained in this regard, which were indeed not, of course, justified, but to some extent explicable, on the ground of the readiness of his wilier partners in the game of "high politics" to give their assent to the preposterous claim he appears to have put forward in March 1915 on behalf of Russia to the future acquisition of Constantinople with part of Thrace and both shores of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles with a couple of islands thrown in—a part of those recently disclosed secret agreements for the realization of which rivers of blood were being shed by millions of human beings in the belief that they were laying down their lives

for the liberty of the world and the triumph of right over might in "a war to end war."

In the meantime the fates, as if to give European mankind a last chance to return to sanity, had allowed the French to gain in the Battle of the Marne a victory which decided irrevocably the final issue of the war, by demonstrating the impossibility of France being overpowered by a sudden onslaught on the success of which the whole plan of campaign had been calculated by the German General Staff. Henceforth the war was bound to become a long, protracted, sanguinary struggle, which could only end in the material and moral collapse of the Central Powers as the obviously weaker side. So far no irreparable damage had been done; no calamitous devastation of vast areas had yet taken place; the incipient war psychosis had not yet reached the acute and hopeless stage in which it seems to have become fixed since, and the passions of hatred and revenge created by the war had not yet come to dominate the minds of men to the exclusion of calm deliberation and statesmanship. The time seemed to have come for an attempt to bring about the pacification of the world. Such an attempt could only be made by those Powers who had had the wisdom to stay aside from the titanic conflict between the two alliances. It was plain that neutral countries were bound to reap certain material advantages by exploiting the boundless needs of both belligerent sides, but it was no less self-evident that, while certain groups of men in these countries, manufacturers of war material of every conceivable kind, financial magnates, negotiators of loans, purveyors of foodstuffs, and so on, were going to be enriched beyond the dreams of avarice, and no less than war profiteers in belligerent countries—nevertheless the masses of the people even in neutral countries were bound to become sufferers—and the greater sufferers the longer the war should last—from the fundamental disorganization of the economic life of the whole world and its attending evils, inseparable from a war on such a gigantic scale.

It seemed, therefore, that self-interest alone would have inspired the neutral Powers with the desire to bring about a termination of the war, whose indefinite prolongation, with its fatal consequences to all Europe, their statesmen could

not have failed to foresee. The simplest way to reach such a result obviously would have been for all the neutral Powers to form a coalition with the United States at their head and to join in arms our side as the stronger one, rendering it so overpoweringly strong as to enable it to enforce a peace upon such conditions as, not hatred and vengeance, but reason and statesmanship, would dictate. Such a coalition and such an armed intervention were, however, not to be thought of, simply because it would have been impossible—or, let us say, hardly possible—to establish between all of them a full agreement as to which of the two sides they would decide to join. For it must not be forgotten that in neutral countries not only unreasoning sympathies or hatreds but also reasoned opinions were at first very much divided, and that there was a large body of opinion which held that the question of so-called war guilt as between the two sides—which has been so much made of by propaganda on both sides—had best be decided on the basis of the old saw about the pot calling the kettle black. In this regard it would not be inappropriate to observe that the importance attached by propaganda to this question of guilt and condign punishment for such guilt, together with the demand of a “repentant spirit” on the part of the defeated nations, constitutes a rather novel development in the history of warfare since the time when the defeated Roman legions at the Caudine Forks were made to crawl under the yoke erected by their Samnite victors. Nor must it be forgotten that while propaganda on one side represented the Central Powers as wild beasts wantonly attacking the peace-loving champions of liberty and right, its counterpart propaganda on the other side accused the wild beasts of Pan-Slavism and of Anglo-French envy, hatred and revenge of being bent on the destruction of the innocent lambs of “Deutschtum” and “Kultur.”

There was, however, another way open to the neutral Powers in which they could, if so minded, have rescued the world from the calamity which has since overtaken it and whose full and sinister extent does not seem to be generally realized even yet. If they had united with the United States at its head in a real league to enforce peace, such a league might have offered its mediation to the belligerents,

an offer which, under The Hague Convention, it would have been its unquestionable right, if not indeed its duty, to put forward, and which, as expressly stipulated in that Convention, could not have been considered by either belligerent side as an unfriendly act—it would have been unthinkable that such an offer, backed by the colossal potential power and the commanding moral authority of the United States, could have been declined by either of the belligerent sides.

It stands to reason that the resultant Peace Conference would have led to the conclusion of a "peace by negotiation," that particular bugbear of propaganda, but the only peace that could have become a lasting one and could have rendered possible the birth of a "new international psychology," which President Wilson held to be the paramount need of our time. A vague, instinctive perception of the pressing character of such a need seems, indeed, to prevail everywhere, and it explains the fervour with which the idea of the League of Nations was greeted at first and even now is still clung to by most lovers of peace, presumably in the belief that it will be instrumental in creating the much-needed new international psychology, although its Covenant is intertwined with the stipulations of a treaty which renders illusory any hope placed on a possible improvement in the psychology of mankind, at least in an appreciably near future.

But the most favourable moment for the intervention of a league of neutrals was allowed to pass by. Not one of the neutral Powers realized the opportunity or had the foresight and enterprise to take the initiative in organizing such a league.

In the spring of 1915 the fortune of war, which in the beginning had favoured our arms, at least in Galicia, had decidedly turned its back on us and the collapse of the bureaucratic apparatus under the strain of the war had begun. The first to break down, as was to have been expected, was the railway administration. At the time of the mobilization it had functioned surprisingly well, and had completed this huge operation with exemplary speed and efficiency. But when the disastrous retreat of our armies from Poland and Galicia had begun, complicated by the flight of millions of the unfortunate inhabitants of the devastated regions abandoned to the invading enemy, and when it became

necessary to provide transportation for these millions to be distributed all over Russia and for the evacuation of the war industries from the threatened districts in the west, the railway administration was no longer capable of coping with the immense task thrust upon it. The result was chaos and untold suffering for millions of refugees, tens of thousands of whom were left dying by the roadside for want of transportation facilities and of care and assistance of any kind. The saddest part of this awful tragedy was that the devastation of vast territories and the forced flight of their inhabitants were organized by our own military authorities in conformity with the teachings, it seems, of the science of warfare, which demand that evacuated regions must be abandoned to an invading enemy in a condition approaching as near as possible that of a desert.

Next to break down was the system of providing for the armies the needed ammunition and war material of every kind. The fatal shortage of ammunition had made itself sorely felt during the retreat of our armies, and was, indeed, said to have been the main cause of their defeat. Public indignation on this account was directed principally against the Minister of War, General Soukhomlinoff, and in the sequel, under the Provisional Government, caused his trial on charges the most serious of which were not satisfactorily proved, only the minor ones—negligence and corruption in the administration of the Ministry of War—being substantiated. He was, nevertheless, sentenced to hard labour for life. But, characteristically enough, his real and most serious guilt, that of having advised the general mobilization, when he must have known that it meant war and that Russia was little prepared for such an adventure, was but lightly touched upon during the trial. It should, however, be observed that the colossal expenditure of ammunition in this war surpassed the expectations of the war departments of all the belligerent Powers, not excluding that of Germany, which was undoubtedly the best prepared of all.

The disorganization of the economic life of the country and the advent of reckless finance had, of course, to be foreseen and could, indeed, not have been avoided under the circumstances. Not one of the belligerent countries escaped these baneful consequences of a war on such a

vast scale. The difference was only one of degree. Russia being the weakest economically and financially of the Allied Powers, necessarily suffered the most in this respect. During the first part of the war, owing mainly to the prohibition of the sale of liquor and to the increased demand for agricultural produce for the Army, the peasantry had been accumulating large sums of money and the deposits in the Government savings banks had shown a very marked increase. But this prosperity was more apparent than real, nor was it lasting. Some 17,000,000 men had been mobilized for the war, of whom about 80 per cent. were drawn from the peasantry. The withdrawal of such vast numbers of men in the prime of life from labour on the land, together with the requisition for the Army of enormous numbers of horses and cattle, could not but have the most injurious effect on agricultural conditions all over the country; that is to say, on the main source of the country's prosperity.

But the most alarming feature of the situation was the composition of the personnel of the Government and the conditions in which the Ministers had to attend to the business of governing an immense Empire. This is how it impressed an observant foreigner :

From the outbreak of the War (writes Mr. E. H. Wilcox in *Russia's Ruin*) down to that of the Revolution, it was always difficult to say who actually ruled Russia and what were his motives for ruling it in that particular way. There was never either homogeneity in the Cabinet or consistency in its policy. It was never composed of men whose political convictions and administrative aims were all even approximately identical. Its deliberations never issued in a logical sequence of actions. . . . The members of these ill-assorted Cabinets hated, despised and distrusted one another. Cordial co-operation between them was out of the question, and when, as not infrequently happened, the departments of two or more of them were called upon to work together at some common task on which the fate of armies depended, they wasted their time and energies, and imperilled the national safety, by childish disputes as to jurisdiction, or by spiteful mutual obstruction. The nation and its representative institutions were first flattered and cajoled, then insulted and humiliated, then again flattered and cajoled. The Duma was convoked and assured that its co-operation was indispensable ; but hardly had it got to work before it was prorogued, and the Government Bills were hurriedly adopted under Clause 87 of the Fundamental Laws, which allowed the Cabinet "in exceptional circumstances" to pass legislation provisionally without parliamentary sanction. From a Government

which acted in this way, the kind of policy necessary to win the war was not to be expected.

It cannot be said that the picture is overdrawn. It is only to some extent marred by an incidentally introduced remark of the author to the effect that "at times, it seemed that the Government earnestly desired to win the war; at other times, that it as earnestly desired to lose it." The proposition that any Government under the sun engaged in a war, whether of its own seeking or not, could, under any conceivable circumstances, desire to lose it, is of course preposterous. Its enunciation, even qualified by the attenuating clause "at times, it seemed," can only be explained by its author having unconsciously succumbed to the insidious influence of the prevalent war psychosis with its haunting spectres of "premature peace" and "defeatism"—an influence which, in war-time, even some of the clearest thinking minds appear unable to resist. There may have been among the members of the Cabinet one or two men of superior insight who realized that Russia, as far as participation in this war was concerned, was already defeated, and that henceforth it could only be a question of saving what still could be saved from the wreck of her former greatness and prosperity. Russia was defeated, or rather was certain to be defeated, even before the war began, because the overwhelming majority of the people never felt, nor could possibly have felt, this war to be their war—a war for political objects they could neither understand nor have any sympathy with.

Two conditions were essential for Russia to participate with any hope of success in such a war as this war was bound to prove: organization and will to fight of the people. Both these conditions were absent. Nor would organization alone, however perfect, have availed to secure victory, nor even to avert defeat, if the spirit was not there, in the masses of the people behind the Army. Nothing could prove the soundness of this proposition more conclusively than the total collapse that overtook Germany once the spirit of her people had failed. Also, Russia was not defeated in the sense of her armies having been beaten in decisive battles, nor because they had been compelled to abandon to the enemy vast regions in disastrous retreats—during the

Napoleonic Wars our Army, in those days a professional army of a few hundred thousand men, retreated beyond Moscow, and might have retreated to the very Ural Mountains without that having implied Russia's ultimate defeat—but she was defeated because the people, who had furnished the seventeen or more million soldiers, in other words the nation in arms, was sick of the war and decidedly would have no more of it. That was the people's unmistakable will, as also it was its right—a right which could not be questioned, least of all, one should think, by the democracies of free nations.

It was also the truth, which no amount of lying propaganda could conceal, and which only voluntary blindness could fail to see or moral cowardice could shrink from looking in the face. To bow to it would not only not have been a disgrace, but was the bounden duty of the Sovereign and his Government, a sacred duty they owed to the country and to the nation, for that was their only salvation. For having failed to see his true duty and to have acted upon it, the unfortunate Sovereign has paid with his life and the lives of those dearest to him, and Russia with her ruin and eclipse as a once great and powerful Empire. Nor could there have been any betrayal of her Allies implied if Russia had told them the truth and signified to them her demand to begin common negotiations aiming at the conclusion of a general peace. To raise this question at the moment her vital interest demanded it was a right Russia had not, and could not have, renounced by putting her signature to the Declaration of London; for if she had, those who acted on her behalf would have been guilty of treason to their country and their people. The real betrayal, however, of our Allies was the concealment from them of the truth. It was also a betrayal of the nation, because in order to conceal it efforts had to be made to force upon an unwilling people a continuation of the war until at last they revolted against it, which was the real underlying meaning of the revolution.

But there was, alas! no one in the Cabinet possessed of sufficient insight and authority to insist upon the only policy being adopted which would have been compatible with Russia's honour and vital interest and which if followed would have saved not only Russia but Europe from the chaos they are weltering in at present.

I would observe at this point that the question of a separate peace has never been raised at any time or by anyone. Nor had any secret negotiations with the Central Powers been carried on by anyone behind the back of Russia's Allies. In this connection I may quote the opinion of Dr. E. J. Dillon, who, in his *Eclipse of Russia*, writes :

The most painful impression of all, Entente publicists tell us, was made by the perfidious conduct of Nicholas II in arranging for a separate peace in the year 1916-17 when his devoted Allies were shedding their blood and giving their substance ungrudgingly in his cause. I cannot agree with them. I have made inquiries into this allegation and, although it is uncommonly difficult to prove a negative assertion, the upshot of my investigation comes as near to it as one can reasonably demand. So far as I have been able to ascertain, there is not a tittle of evidence to show that Nicholas II had the intention to make a separate peace. That conditions being what they were his armies could not, with the best will in the world, have continued to fight much longer on the same scale as theretofore may be taken for granted. But it nowise follows that he would have concluded a separate peace. And from what I know of his mentality, of the motives to which he was most impressible and of the available evidence, I look upon that assumption as most improbable. Certain ignoble charges launched against the Tsarists whose meddling in politics was disastrous to the Tsardom are equally groundless and even more characteristic of those who first launched them.

These groundless accusations brought against Russia's Sovereigns—as Dr. Dillon, who certainly cannot be suspected of any bias in favour of them, or of Tsardom, says—by Entente publicists, or by war propaganda, were destined to play a most fatal part in subsequent events, as will be shown later. Dr. Dillon's opinion as to the groundlessness of these accusations is corroborated by documentary evidence which has recently come to light. After the massacre by the Bolsheviks of the Imperial couple and their unfortunate children a quantity of papers, letters, diaries, etc., was found among their effects in the house in which they had been confined at Ekaterinburg. Among them was a series of letters addressed by the Empress to the Emperor during the years 1915 and 1916. The representative at Moscow of a New York newspaper was permitted by the Bolshevik authorities to take copies of these letters, and they have recently been published in that paper. Their absolute

authenticity is vouched for by the internal evidence of their contents, whose intimate character quite excludes the possibility of these letters having been the work of an imaginative forger. They show conclusively that the Emperor was very much under the domination of his wife, that she was a self-willed, ambitious, extremely religious, superstitious and hysterical woman, adoring her husband, worshipping her son, and heart and soul devoted to the country of her adoption, and that she was in her turn dominated by Rasputin, a common, totally uncultured peasant, gifted with a strange hypnotic fascination, whom she believed to be a "Man of God" and to have some esoteric influence over her poor son's health. They also show that her influence was exercised exclusively in matters of domestic policy and in a most unfortunate ultra-reactionary direction, and that Rasputin's influence over the Empress was used mainly to secure appointments to various, sometimes the highest, offices in the State to personages base enough to seek his favour and protection. But in the whole series of letters there is not one word showing that either the Empress or Rasputin ever had anything to say in regard to a "separate" or any other peace.

The disquieting effect produced by the retreat of our armies from Poland and Galicia caused the Government to take some steps which seemed to indicate a disposition to meet the wishes of the "Intelligentzia." General Soukhomlinoff and some other Ministers were replaced by less unpopular ones; members of the Duma and of the Upper House were admitted to Government Commissions dealing with questions connected with the war, the Unions of Zemstvos and municipalities were given more liberty of action in their work of army supply.

On the other hand, the removal from the supreme command of the armies of the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholaevitch and his appointment to the Viceroyalty of the Caucasus, brought about by the influence of the Empress under the suspected guidance of Rasputin, and for motives of her jealousy of the Grand Duke's popularity, was received by the public with mixed feelings, not so much on account of this removal in itself as because it led to the Emperor taking supreme command himself. Not that in a military sense it could have made much difference. As figure-head—

and no man in his position could have been anything more—the Grand Duke had been very useful. War propaganda proclaimed him to be one of the greatest military leaders, and he was unquestionably very popular with the people at large, perhaps even more so than with the Army. His was a picturesque personality. Very tall of stature, of distinguished and imposing mien, he produced the impression of a masterful man, the type of man in whom the people love to recognize a ruler. But the Empress's womanly jealousy, the typical jealousy an adoring wife is apt to feel in regard to her husband's supposed rival, was certainly most unreasonable and unjustified. The Grand Duke was the soul of honour and chivalrous loyalty, and the Emperor could not have had a subject more passionately, more heart and soul devoted, to his Sovereign and to his country.

But the wisdom of the Emperor's decision to take supreme command of the armies himself appeared to be subject to the gravest doubts, not so much, of course, from a military point of view—the presence of the Sovereign among his troops was bound to have some favourable effect on their morale—but because his prolonged absence from the centre of Government would leave the field entirely free for all the sinister influences which were surrounding the Empress. On the other hand—in the words of the above-mentioned author of the review of her letters—"it is clear that the Tsaritsa lost a great deal of her influence on the Tsar as soon as he was out of her presence and far enough away to be relieved of that dread of hysteria in a companion which may make even a strong personality (which he was not) subservient to a weak. Hysteria in letters is less terrifying than hysteria in the next room."

The alarming condition of public affairs led, in the course of the year, to the formation in the Duma of a coalition among the Centre, Octobrist, Progressive and "Cadet" parties with part of the Nationalists, which became known as the "Progressive Bloc," leaving outside of it the Extreme Right, the remainder of the Nationalists and the Socialists. The programme of the Bloc, the result of patriotic compromises between the divergent views of the parties composing it, was a liberal, moderate and entirely reasonable one, which any Government possessed of a modicum of constitutional

experience and political understanding would have accepted unhesitatingly. The demand of the Bloc "for the creation of a homogeneous Government, composed of men enjoying the confidence of the country and willing to carry out, in harmony with the Legislative Chambers, as soon as possible a definite programme aiming at the maintenance of domestic peace and the removal of differences between nationalities and classes" was no less reasonable and should have been granted immediately. For, once the ruling powers were determined—as they undoubtedly were—to continue to carry on the war, in disregard of the manifest unwillingness of the bulk of the people and of the crying need of the country, it was the height of folly not to conciliate at least the political parties who had been supporting and were anxious to continue to support the Government's war policy. The Government's insane domestic policy, which could only in the end—as actually happened—drive these parties into the arms of the revolution, was the more reckless as the fact of the close connection of some of the Duma leaders with certain important elements in the high Army Command could not possibly have been unknown to the ruling powers.

¹ *Russia's Ruin*, by E. H. Wilcox.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Goremykin is succeeded by Stuermer—A "peace without victory"—My political faith—A memorandum for the Emperor—Attempt to detach Turkey—Visit to England—Talk with Mr. Asquith—Importance of peace to Russia—Protopopoff—Situation in Russia.

IN the beginning of 1916, although the Duma was not in session, it appears that its President, Mr. Rodzianko, succeeded in persuading the aged Prime Minister, Mr. Goremykin, to resign the functions of head of the Government, for the efficient exercise of which, in the troubled times through which the country was passing, he manifestly no longer possessed the necessary strength.

He was succeeded by Mr. Boris Stuermer, of whom the best that could be said is that he was merely a very ordinary functionary of even less than average capacity, who owed his sudden elevation, as appears to be well established, to the favour of Rasputin and to the influence of the Empress, to whom Rasputin had recommended him as the most worthy candidate for the position of head of the Government. Of his appointment Mr. E. H. Wilcox writes in his *Russia's Ruin*:

It became the custom in Russia and among the Allies to speak of Stuermer as a convinced partisan of Germany and a deliberate traitor to his country. That view is probably a flattering one. It is more likely that he was merely an obsequious and servile functionary whose deepest conviction was that it was pleasant and profitable to be in favour in high places and whose main political aim was to get as near to those places as possible.

This characterization of Mr. Stuermer fits the case exactly. If the author's allusion to Stuermer's suspected German partisanship and deliberate betrayal of his own country is intended to mean that he was suspected of having disclosed

to the enemy "most precious secrets"—as Miliukoff is said to have asserted in a speech in the Duma, according to Mr. Wilcox—or of having carried on secret negotiations for the conclusion of a separate peace with Germany, I can only say that the suspicions, apparently entertained by Mr. Miliukoff and his political friends, from whom Entente diplomats were wont to gather their information on Russian affairs, are not supported by any evidence as far as I know.

But that Mr. Stuermer failed in his bounden duty, which was to have raised with our Allies the question of the earliest possible conclusion of a *general* peace, is a fact to which I could, if necessary, bear witness myself, since I requested and obtained an interview with him when he had become Minister of Foreign Affairs, for the special purpose of representing to him the urgency of such a step being taken without the least delay, because that was the only possible way, compatible with Russia's honour and dignity, of extricating the country from her critical position; and my urgent representations not only had been unsuccessful, but their reason and purport apparently failed to have been even understood by the new head of the Foreign Department, whom I found slightly less pompous, but on the other hand even more incompetent, than his predecessor in office.

In connection with this so frequently ventilated subject of "separate" or "general" peace, of "premature" peace, or "peace without victory," and of "peace by negotiation" as opposed to "peace by dictation," I feel compelled, before proceeding with my narrative, to submit to my indulgent readers a few considerations of a general nature which I hope may help to dispel some of the prevalent misconceptions born of war psychosis and fostered by war propaganda.

Leaving aside the point of view of those who rightly hold that war of whatsoever kind, whether between nations or between parties or classes within nations, is an unmitigated curse, of which mankind should and could rid itself as, in Anglo-Saxon countries at least, it has succeeded in eliminating that private war between individuals, the duel, which is still tolerated in most other countries of Europe, there are two kinds of mental attitude in regard to war, conflicting with each other and alternately gaining the upper hand. First, there is the attitude of what I would call the military or

militaristically thinking mind, which looks upon war not so much as a means to an end, but rather as an end in itself, so to speak, as a game that can only be won—like a game of chess—by a checkmate, be it even with the sacrifice on both sides of almost all their chessmen—a stalemate, that is to say a “peace without victory,” being considered equivalent to a defeat, and any suggestion of the desirability of such a peace looked upon as an act of treason—or else as a prize fight that can only be ended by a “knock-out blow” dealt to the adversary. This is the mental attitude that has fathered such ideas, expressed in apparently senseless because illogical terms, as for instance the idea of “a peace offensive,” meaning an adversary’s proposal to enter upon negotiations for the conclusion of peace; or the idea of a “premature peace” as a peace concluded before a “knock-out blow” had been dealt or received; or the reproach of “defeatism,” applied to the endeavours of those who aim at preventing the final defeat and ruin of their country. Such a mentality is a survival of the past when war was “the sport of kings” and could be waged for any cause, and could be carried on for any length of time as long as the necessary cash could be secured and willing cannon fodder could be hired or pressed into service; when kings considered their countries as their private domains and their subjects as human material to be utilized for any service they pleased; when kings and rulers could conclude such agreements between themselves as, for instance, the Declaration of London of September 5, 1914, in the honest belief that they had the right to pledge the lives and honour of their subjects or their fellow-citizens and that these subjects or citizens were in duty bound to keep, at the sacrifice of their lives and fortunes, their rulers’ engagements concluded without their knowledge and consent.

On the other hand, there is the attitude of what might be called the civilian mind, or the mind thinking on lines of statesmanship preoccupied, not with the idea of “winning the game” of war or of the glory of dealing a “knock-out blow” to the adversary, but with the solemn duty of securing the permanent interests and welfare of the people confided to its care. This kind of mentality looks upon war as an unavoidable evil, necessary at a given stage of the mental and moral development of mankind, for the purpose of

attaining certain well-defined and practically attainable ends, and is ready and willing to begin negotiations for the conclusion of peace as soon as these ends are attained or it has become evident that they cannot be attained except at the cost of sacrifices not commensurate with the advantages aimed at.

Both these mental attitudes, although conflicting one with the other, were, so to speak, balancing each other in former times, when wars were waged with armies of limited size and the ultimate decision of questions of policy was still left in the hands of statesmanship not yet overpowered by the domination of irresponsible military organizations and by the unreasoning passions of systematically fostered mass psychosis.

These times, however, were no more. But latter-day statesmen of all the leading nations of Europe seemed to be quite unconscious of the profoundly altered conditions which had been brought about by the adoption of conscription by the leading Powers of Continental Europe. They were playing unconcernedly, as of old, the traditional nefarious game of high politics whose aim is political and military supremacy, and which is played with stakes represented by the lives and fortunes of the teeming millions of the peace-loving peoples of Europe. When it had led to the outbreak of a war of unparalleled dimensions, and when, in order to hold out to these peaceable millions a powerful motive for which they would be willing to risk their lives and fortunes, the formidable ghost of international hatred and fear had been raised—a ghost which to this hour it has not been possible to lay—it became evident that the longer the war lasted the slenderer would grow the chances of statesmanship remaining in control, a control which was bound to pass in the end into the hands of the all-powerful military element, supported and itself dominated by the all-pervading influence of war psychosis, at once the parent and the child of Propaganda, with the disastrous results we are witnessing to-day. That was the real danger threatening not only the future welfare of the belligerent nations, but the future peaceful development of mankind.

To any independently reflecting mind it could not but be evident that the loudly proclaimed aim of the war as a

“war to end war” and a war to destroy “militarism” could never be attained by a crushing victory achieved by either of the belligerent sides, which would only mean the substitution of a victorious militarism for a defeated one, thereby simply preparing the ground for a renewal of the struggle for supremacy in a more or less remote future, since the total annihilation of the defeated side, however ardently desired, would obviously not be within the bounds of possibility, nor could its ultimate recuperation be forever prevented by any devices of statecraft or military precautions.

It would seem probable that President Wilson, when he spoke of “peace without victory,” may have had in view these same considerations, which would naturally occur to a mind earnestly preoccupied with the search for a new basis upon which the community of civilized nations might be so organized as to preclude the possibility of the recurrence of such horrors as the world was passing through, and they may have inspired his attempt at inducing the belligerents to put an end to the slaughter by negotiation before the war psychosis prevailing in both camps had reached a stage when leading statesmen would no longer be able to lay the ghost they had raised themselves.

I have dwelt at such length on these considerations, of whose weighty nature I was entirely convinced at the time, because they serve to explain my personal attitude in regard to the question of the earliest possible conclusion of a general peace, which I regarded not only as a question of life or death for Russia, but also as a question of supreme interest to all mankind, an attitude from which no fear of obloquy or disingenuous insinuations could ever make me swerve. Perhaps it will not be superfluous at this point to recapitulate briefly my political profession of faith, to which I have incidentally referred in other chapters of these reminiscences. It can be expressed in these few points :

Russia, like the United States, may be regarded as a continent by itself, self-contained, self-sufficient, satiated, placed above the necessity of seeking expansion in any direction whatever.

Russia, therefore, has no call to take any part whatever in the struggle for political or military supremacy in Europe,

either as a principal, or as an auxiliary or adversary of any one Power or group of Powers.

Russia's sole interest in European politics centres in the maintenance of peace.

And, lastly, the guiding principle of Russia's foreign policy should be: avoidance of any entangling alliances with any Power or Powers whatsoever.

To this brief exposé of the principles which have always governed my actions in public life I would add that once the struggle for supremacy seems to be an incurable disease affecting the three leading Powers of Europe—Great Britain, France and Germany—and as I hold it to be a matter of indifference to Russia, inasmuch as her true interests are concerned, into whose hands of the three this supremacy might pass, my personal preference would be in favour of Great Britain, simply because from choice I have found my intellectual home in the English-speaking world. But this purely personal preference does not by any means imply that I would be ready to admit that Russia's policy should be made in any way subservient to Great Britain's aims in that direction, just as little as to those of either France or Germany if either the one or the other had been the object of my personal preference. And I would wish it to be distinctly understood that whatever I have said or written so far, and whatever I shall still have to say or write, has been and will be said and written by a Russian, owing and acknowledging allegiance and loyalty to no one but to his own country and to his own people, who, in their distress and agony, have become objects of obloquy and contumely heaped on them by those who deem themselves entitled to show their contempt for a great and generous nation, whose alliance they had been eagerly courting, because that nation disappointed the expectations raised through the misinterpretation of the Russian people's real feelings by their own as well as by Russian war propaganda.

But to resume the thread of my narrative. It was, if I remember rightly, some day in the beginning of March 1916 when I found myself in the reading-room of my club, after luncheon, alone with the Minister of the Court, Count Fredericksz, who had come with the Emperor for a couple of days to the capital and who was the same afternoon to return

with His Majesty to the Headquarters of the Army at Mohileff. He may have noticed that I seemed to be preoccupied and paying but little attention to his chat on indifferent subjects ; and he asked me abruptly what I thought of the political situation. I told him that I regarded the situation in every respect as extremely serious, not to say critical ; that as far as I could see we were drifting rapidly towards a revolution, which would mean the downfall of the Empire and the ruin of Russia ; that the only salvation for Russia that I could think of would be the earliest possible conclusion of a general peace (I would observe here parenthetically that I have never at any time advocated the conclusion of a " separate " peace with Germany, for the simple reason that I have never considered the conclusion of such a peace to be to the interest of Russia or to be called for by compelling circumstances) ; that I could not see how the war could ever come to an end otherwise than under the auspices of the United States and through their intervention in one shape or another ; that it was of the utmost importance for us that when such an American intervention should come about it should be in a sense not unfavourable to our interests ; and lastly, that if it were considered desirable I would be ready at any time to go to America for the purpose of satisfying myself as to the trend of popular feeling in the United States in regard to the war, simply as a private individual on the look out for a possibility of securing the participation of American capital in some business undertaking in which I was interested. Count Fredericksz listened to me very attentively, and when I had finished talking asked me whether I could put on paper what I had told him, as he wished to submit it to the Emperor, whom he was to join in the Imperial train at four o'clock. I consented to do so, although I had barely half an hour before me in which to draft what should have been a well-thought-out and carefully worded State paper. Under the circumstances all I could do was to jot down then and there on a sheet of the club's letter-paper the substance of the ideas I had developed in the course of my conversation with the Count. I sent it to the train in an envelope addressed to Count Fredericksz, who received it just in time ; and then I wrote down from memory a second copy which I intended to forward to Mr. Sazonoff, the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Unfortunately, I did not make and keep for myself a third copy, so that I am unable to reproduce here the text of this hastily drawn document, whose sense I think I have rendered correctly as above.

In the middle of the following night I was awakened by the arrival of a rush telegram despatched by the Minister of the Court from one of the stations on the way to Mohileff, in which he informed me that the Emperor had expressed his approval of the ideas set forth in my paper and desired me to confer on the subject with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In obedience to the order received, I wrote the next morning to Mr. Sazonoff requesting an interview and enclosing the copy of my paper which I had prepared for that purpose. The Minister of Foreign Affairs received me in a manner which precluded any attempt on my part to enter into a discussion on the subject, and told me that he disapproved the idea I had expressed in my paper submitted to His Majesty by Count Fredericksz, because in his opinion the object of the policy of the United States was to prevent us from crushing Germany, an event which was to be looked for in a few months. I thereupon withdrew, having asked him whether he had any objection to my acquainting the Minister of the Court with the negative result of my interview with him, and having obtained his consent to my doing so.

I mention this insignificant episode merely because in the sequel I shall have to refer to it later on in connection with another matter in which this paper of mine seems to have played a rather unsuspected part.

Our campaign in Asia Minor, conducted with brilliant success by General Yudenitch, had culminated in the taking of Erzerum, and to all appearances the military and political situation in Turkey had taken a turn which furnished sufficient ground for the supposition that an attempt at detaching Turkey from her alliance with the Central Powers by the offer of a separate peace might meet with success. The idea of the timeliness of such an attempt being made occurred to a friend of mine who was in charge of the Diplomatic Chancellery of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. Of course such an attempt would have implied the definitive abandonment by us of any plans for the conquest of Constantinople, plans for the realization of which there was absolutely no hope that

could be said to be warranted by the general military situation of Russia and her Allies. Having consulted on the subject the Chief of the General Staff, General Alexeeff, who concurred entirely in his views, my friend submitted his plan to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, only, as was to be expected, to be reproved for his pains. Of the soundness and practicability of my friend's idea I had no doubt, provided only it were possible to overcome the maniacal obsession under which our politicians and the majority of our "Intelligentzia" were labouring in regard to the assumed necessity for Russia to secure possession of Constantinople and the Straits.

It appears, indeed, if rumour is to be believed, that the Turks had actually some time in the spring of 1916 thrown out a feeler to the Government of one of the Allied Powers as to the possibility of the conclusion of a separate peace with the Entente, and upon being advised to broach the subject first of all to Russia as the Power principally interested, had replied that it was impossible for them to approach with such a proposal the Power whose hardly concealed aim was the conquest of the capital of their Empire.

It is hardly necessary to point out the obvious reasons why the successful realization of this idea would have exercised a most important and probably decisive influence on the course of events. But it was Russia's fate that her policies should have been conducted with the same incompetence during the war as they had been before its outbreak.

Early in May of that year communications were received from the Governments of Great Britain, France and Italy, inviting our Legislature to delegate ten members of each House for a visit to the Allied countries. Ten members of the Duma accepted at once the invitation, but among the members of the Council of the Empire only seven, of whom I was the only one not elected, but appointed by the Crown, were found willing to undertake the journey. Our President had suggested that before leaving we had perhaps better see the Minister of Foreign Affairs and concert with him the attitude we were to observe in foreign parts in regard to statesmen or representatives of the Press with whom we might come into contact. He had also taken steps to arrange for us an interview with Mr. Sazonoff. We were received by him, we seven members of the Upper House, *in corpore*,

and after some desultory conversation, he proceeded to give us an account of the negotiations he had been carrying on in the preceding year with the British and French Governments which had resulted in the conclusion of a secret agreement by which these Governments consented to our taking and retaining possession of Constantinople, of part of Thrace as far as the line Enos-Media, of the Asiatic shores of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and of two of the Ægean Islands commanding the entrance to the Straits. He showed us, with considerable naïve satisfaction, on a large map the future possessions which Russia was to receive as the price of her participation in the war for the "triumph of right over might."

This was the first disclosure made, very confidentially, of a secret agreement between the Allied Powers, which was to be followed by several others of a no less remarkable and equally secret character. When we had left the Minister's presence and found ourselves in the street, one of my colleagues took a long breath and said to me in French: "*Et dire que ça c'est un ministre des affaires etrangeres; mais c'est effrayant.*"

Our journey to England was in all respects a very enjoyable one. We were apparently all happy to escape for a while from the atmosphere of nervous tension in which we had been living for nearly two years, and the utmost good feeling prevailed among the members of our small party. The leader of the delegation from the Lower House was Mr. Alexander Protopopoff, at the time Vice-President and a rather popular member of the Duma, who a few months later became notorious as the last Minister of the Interior under the old regime, whose downfall he not only failed to prevent, but by his insane policy helped to achieve. I had not known him personally before, but as a travelling companion I found him all that could be desired.

My impression of him was that he was an amiable nonentity, a shifty politician in a small way, with no settled convictions and quite incapable of conceiving and carrying through any independent line of policy. His sudden elevation to the post of Minister of the Interior seems to have turned his head completely, so much so that at last serious doubts began to be entertained as to his sanity.

Among our travelling companions of the Duma, the most prominent were the leader of the "Cadet" Party, Mr. P. Miliukoff, and Mr. Shingareff, who in the year following became Minister of Agriculture and then of Finance in the Provisional Government, and ended by being shot in his bed in a prison hospital by the murderous bandits of Bolshevism. Of my own colleagues of the Council of the Empire, one, a very wealthy landowner in South Russia, seems to have met last winter with a tragic and mysterious fate, according to newspaper accounts. His body and those of several members of his family and of some other relatives, together with the bodies of all the members of the crew, were found on a disabled little steamer on which they appear to have escaped from Odessa in the hope of being able to reach some port on the Black Sea coast. They had probably encountered very heavy weather, the steamer had become disabled on the high sea and they had run short of provisions and water until starvation stared them in the face, and nothing remained but to cut short their agony by shooting one another, the last one committing suicide. Thus ran the harrowing story as told by the papers.

What became of my other colleagues I have no means of ascertaining. Some of us, like myself, felt at the time that the days of the old Russia we loved were counted, and that a catastrophe was due to overtake us, but no one could foresee its extent and atrocious character.

After a long railway journey through Finland, Sweden and Norway, we were to embark at Bergen for Newcastle, and we had passages engaged for us on a Norwegian steamer still plying between those ports, unabashed by the risk of encountering German submarines. On arrival at the station at Bergen, while we were clamouring for the steamship company's agent who was to have taken charge of our baggage, we were met by the Russian and British consuls, who in mysterious whispers imparted to us the information that we were not to embark on the mail steamer, as other means had been provided for taking us to England. We were hurried away in automobiles before the watchful eyes, as we were told, of some official of the German consulate, and were carried to a special landing stage where boats were waiting for us in charge of Norwegian naval officers

to take us to the King of Norway's yacht, where we were most hospitably welcomed and treated to a luxurious luncheon.

As soon as we had all come on board, the yacht weighed anchor and went out to sea, up a beautiful fjord, at the top of which, after about an hour's steaming, we descried in the shadow of a high mountain the imposing form of a large British cruiser on which we were to embark. The *Donegal* had arrived the day before—a venial infraction of international law—and had spent the night at anchor, guarded against possible submarine attacks by several Norwegian torpedo-boats. We were made extremely comfortable on board; room was found for everybody, thanks to the kindness and courtesy of the captain and officers, some of whom gave up their cabins for the night. We were to have landed the following morning at some point up the Moray Firth—I believe it was Inverness—where a special train was waiting to take us to London. In the middle of the night, however, a wireless message was received from the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Jellicoe, ordering the *Donegal* to proceed to Scapa Flow instead of Inverness. When we were told of it in the morning we were delighted to find that we would have a chance to see the majestic spectacle of the Grand Fleet at anchor at its base. However, on arrival at Scapa Flow we found that during the night the whole fleet had gone to sea, presumably in consequence of some alarm, and we saw only a small part of it returning to its anchorage. We were transferred to a small steamer and taken to the port of Thurso, where the special train ordered up from Inverness was waiting for us. On arrival at Thurso we learned that the reason why our destination had suddenly been altered was that it had been discovered that during the night German submarines had succeeded in barring the mouth of the Moray Firth with a chain of submerged mines.

From the moment we set foot on British soil until the time fixed for the departure of the delegation for Paris and Rome we were the guests of the Government, and nothing could have exceeded the courteous cordiality and the generous hospitality extended to us. A few days after our arrival we had the honour of being presented to their Majesties the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace. Upon our

entering the drawing-room, where we were assembled, the King addressed to us a brief speech of cordial welcome, after which the individual presentations took place and their Majesties engaged each of us in turn in some minutes of animated conversation.

In the evening of the same day we were entertained at Lancaster House at a banquet presided over by the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, to which most of the prominent personages of the political world had been bidden. Being seated at table next to the Prime Minister, I took occasion to tell him that on arrival in London I had received an invitation from the American Luncheon Club—an association of American residents and business men established in London and presided over by the American Ambassador—to be their guest at a luncheon, when I would be expected to deliver a speech. That luncheon was to take place the following day, and as I was anxious not to say anything that might not be in entire harmony with the Prime Minister's views, I gave him a complete exposé of the address I had prepared and intended to deliver before my American hosts. Mr. Asquith listened to me attentively and was kind enough to say that he approved everything I intended to say, and reiterated the expression of his approval in a personal note to me when I had enclosed to him a clipping from the *Daily Telegraph* containing a verbatim report of my speech which appeared in that paper on June 6, 1916, under the caption "Neutrals and the War. A Grave Responsibility."

I believe that the Allied Governments had a vague inkling of an impending weakening of Russia's participation in the war; only, unable to understand its real causes, they attributed it to intrigues aiming at the conclusion of a separate peace with Germany and being engineered by supposedly German influences surrounding the unfortunate Empress, a delusion in which they were presumably encouraged by rumours reaching them from equally misinformed Russian sources.

I also believe that the object of the invitations extended to delegations from our Legislative Chambers was to impress them with the colossal extent of the preparations being made in Allied countries for the effective continuation of the war, in the hope that by their reports and influence they

would counteract the suspected pacifist tendencies of the Government and encourage it to increased efforts and activity in the conduct of the war.

Be that as it may, all that I had been able to observe confirmed me in the conviction that the material resources of the Allies were so greatly and so palpably superior to those of the Central Powers as to render the ultimate outcome of the contest an absolutely foregone conclusion. It was, moreover, plain that the cause of the Entente, in as far as it pursued, not the realization of such plans as stand revealed now in the secret agreements between its members, but the legitimate end of defeating the ambitious aims of the German ruling caste, was already won, and that the cause of the Central Powers, in as far as it aimed at the establishment of Germany's military supremacy in Europe, was irretrievably lost, and had been practically lost ever since the French victory on the Marne. The spectre of a threatened German overlordship of the world had no longer any basis in fact, and could, therefore, at best serve only as a device of "frightfulness," to be used by propaganda for the purpose of keeping alive the war psychosis, recovery from which it was the obvious duty of statesmanship on both sides to promote by every possible means, not only in the interest of the belligerent nations, but in that of the future peaceful development of mankind.

Two ways were open for bringing about negotiations with a view to the conclusion of a general peace ; they were : the announcement by one of the belligerent sides of its readiness to enter into such negotiations, or else an offer of mediation by a League of Neutral Powers sufficiently powerful to make it sure that its offer would not be rejected by either side.

As regards the first mode of procedure it is plain that such an announcement could be safely made by the winning side without running any risk whatever of its initiative being treated as a "trap," or a so-called "peace offensive," as happened to the losing side when, under pressure of popular thirst—or perhaps one had better say literally "hunger"—for peace, it ventured upon such a step. It was my profound conviction that the time had come for Russia to raise with her Allies—as was her incontestable right—the question of

the timeliness—nay, urgency—of initiating serious steps with a view to a general peace. This conviction was based on the following considerations: The coming of a revolution in Russia was a matter of certainty; its coming was not dependent on the issue of the war, whether victorious or otherwise—indeed, it would not wait for such an issue to be decided one way or the other, since it would be primarily a revolt against the war itself; this revolt would be the resultant of elemental forces working among the inarticulate masses of the people sick of a war, with all its attendant suffering and misery, inflicted on them by their rulers, and not of German intrigues in Court or Government circles, as Allied and Russian war propaganda would have it, presumably in the naïve belief that the fighting spirit of the people could be roused by such insinuations; the Army was no longer composed of first-class troops such as by the hundred thousand had laid down their lives on the battlefields of East Prussia, Poland and Galicia: they were mainly reserve troops, commanded by a sadly depleted corps of officers also largely composed of officers of the reserve or promoted from the ranks—in a word, largely hordes of armed peasants, whose hearts were not at the front, but in their abandoned homes, and who in case of a revolution would be sure to side with whomsoever would bring them peace. The outbreak of the revolution was merely a question of time, of a few months at the utmost, and there was only one way in which it could be prevented and the country could be saved from catastrophe, and that was the conclusion of peace (when I say peace I always mean a general peace and *not* a *separate* peace with Germany); the moment was favourable for the initiation of peace negotiations; the brilliant campaign of General Yudenitch in Asia Minor and General Broussiloff's victorious advance in Galicia, which had helped to avert disaster from Italy, had redeemed the glory of the Russian arms, and Russia presented still—at least in appearance—a very formidable and threatening front to the enemy; it was no less to the interest of our Allies to seize the opportunity for the initiation of such negotiations whilst Russia was still standing erect, because a coalition being a chain the strength of which is dependent on its weakest link, prudent foresight would have suggested to them the

advantage of not waiting until that weakness had become a breakdown inevitable in case of a revolution.

All these considerations, whose soundness subsequent events have confirmed, it was not my province to expose to the Allies. That, and not futile attempts at concealing from them the truth, was the plain duty of whosoever was responsible for the conduct of our foreign policy. It was a duty of honour and loyalty to our Allies no less than a sacred duty to our Sovereign, our country, and our nation, whose salvation depended on the earliest possible conclusion of peace. To listen and to accede to her representations would have been a duty of loyalty to Russia resting with her Allies. Their failure to do so, and that alone, would have not only justified but necessitated the conclusion by Russia of a separate peace with Germany—an eventuality much to be deprecated, but to which Russian statesmen would have been bound to resign themselves in such a case, or else to have become traitors to their own country.

As for me, all I could do was to try to press these considerations upon the attention of those who were in charge of our policies. I attempted to do so with Stuermer, with his successor, Pokroffsky, and after the Revolution with the Provisional Government, first of Prince Lwoff and then of Kerensky, and never ceased my efforts until the very eve of the Bolshevik Revolution, of whose impending advent I warned them as an inevitable consequence of their obstinate persistence in a policy which could only end in throwing the country into the abyss of anarchy and civil war.

My expectation that our Allies, if approached in the proper way, would be willing to enter into our view of the situation and to act accordingly was naturally based on the supposition that their statesmen would not consider the downfall and dismemberment of Russia to be desirable in the interest of their countries, as for various reasons some politicians in both countries seemed to think. Also, it was not in that quarter—if, as I said, approached in the proper way and with unreserved frankness—that I apprehended that the chief difficulty would be encountered, but rather in the fatuous blindness and incompetence of those in whose hands a cruel fate had placed the conduct of Russia's foreign policy,

an apprehension which subsequent events have proved to have been well founded.

There was, however, another way in which the initiation of peace negotiations could have been brought about, and that was through the intervention of a league of nations headed by the United States. Nothing short of such a league would have had sufficiently authoritative influence on the public mind in both belligerent camps to induce them to accept mediation with a view to the conclusion of a peace by negotiation. No close observer of the political situation could have failed to realize that the direction of affairs on both sides had slipped, or was about to slip, from the hands of statesmanship, and would henceforth be swayed by that mentality which can see no other possible termination of a war but by a "knock-out blow," "crushing" of the adversary, and peace by "dictation."

In connection with the banquet at Lancaster House an incident occurred which, quite insignificant in itself, represented nevertheless a little rift in the lute of our companionship in the Parliamentary Delegation and which caused me, so as to avoid its possible widening, to remain behind when my colleagues left for Paris and Rome.

It happened in this way: On the day before the banquet our Ambassador sent me word that it had been decided, according to customary etiquette, that I, as ranking member of the delegation from our Upper House, should reply to the Prime Minister's speech on behalf of the Council of the Empire. To this arrangement, however, three of my colleagues demurred on the ground that I was an appointed and therefore, properly speaking, not a representative member of the Council, and that, moreover, my name was a German one. The unanswerable character of the first reason given I could only acknowledge, and to the second one I could not take exception, since in view of the war it had been considered advisable to rechristen St. Petersburg into Petrograd, and I could not repudiate my name, of which I had no reason to be ashamed.

Upon my return to Russia I found the situation by no means improved. The ship of State seemed to be drifting, rudderless and helpless, steersmen being changed to all appearances quite aimlessly—Sazonoff was replaced by

Stuermer, a man, however incompetent as a statesman, at least experienced in the handling of the business of his office, by a man absolutely incapable and entirely ignorant of foreign affairs. Protopopoff was appointed Minister of the Interior—it was said because he had been recommended for the post by the Empress at the instigation of Rasputin. But the most important, and in its consequences most fatal, measure was decided upon at a Council of Ministers presided over by the Emperor at the Headquarters of the Army at Mohileff. General Alexeeff, the Emperor's Chief of Staff and practically Commander-in-Chief of the Army, had demanded the immediate mobilization of 12,000,000 men to provide for the replenishing of possible losses during the year, without which he declared he could not undertake to continue the campaign. All the Ministers had energetically protested against this measure, to be taken at harvest time, when all available hands were needed for securing the crops, not to mention that the infallible effect of this mobilization would obviously be the creation of a gigantic army, which could not be utilized at the front and would have to be spread all over the country in readiness for the coming revolution. General Alexeeff, however, remained obdurate, and the Emperor finally sided with him.

It seems as if nothing was to be left undone that could ensure the downfall of the Empire and the ruin of the nation.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Foreign influences in Russia—Trepoff as Prime Minister—Interviews with Pokroffsky—An Imperial order—Visit of Lord Milner and others—Causes of the Revolution—The Soviet—Interview with Kerensky—Fruitless efforts—American mission at Petrograd.

ANY attempt to convey an accurate idea of the situation of affairs and of the moral atmosphere prevailing in Russia's capital during the last months of the existence of the Empire, must necessarily fail on the score of incompleteness when undertaken by one who, like myself, although an eye-witness of passing events, was not in touch with the inner circle of the actors of the tragedy, and can, therefore, only relate his personal impressions as an outside observer.

An English visitor, who had come to study the situation, summarized the result of his observations in this brief sentence: "It looks to me like a mild Bedlam."

It was a mild Bedlam indeed, presenting the pitiful spectacle of the governing body of a great Empire helplessly floundering in a sea of self-evoked catastrophal troubles, which they had thought themselves capable of facing successfully and which now threatened to sweep them off their feet, lacking the means to stem the rising tide of disaster, as well as the moral courage to take the only decision that could have saved the country, and gradually sinking deeper and deeper in the mire which was to engulf them, and with them all that remained of Russia's former greatness and prosperity.

Only the wilfully blind could fail to see that the country was drawing ever nearer to the brink of the precipice and that its salvation could be found in the earliest possible conclusion of a general peace. It is hardly possible that really able and perspicacious statesmen at the head of affairs in Allied countries could have entertained any illusions in this regard. But it is quite comprehensible that, being bent—whether

rightly or wrongly from the point of view of their own interests—on continuing the war at any cost, our Allies should have made every effort to keep Russia, as a still valuable, though already somewhat doubtful, asset, as long as possible in the field, whatever might become of her in the end. It might have been to their own interest to save Russia from her impending downfall and ruin, but it was certainly neither their duty nor their business to suggest to the Russian Government the only way in which it could be done. Moreover, the members of our Government, as well as our party leaders, seemed to be much less concerned about saving their country from the impending disaster than they were anxious to save their own "faces"—as a Chinese would put it—in the eyes of our Allies by fervent protestations of loyalty to their cause.

The curious trait of our "Intelligenzia"—I mean a certain tendency to subordinate the obvious interests of their own country to those of foreign Powers and a snobbish eagerness to curry favour in the eyes of foreigners, presumably due to atavistic influences dating back to the centuries of Mongolian domination over mediæval Russia—seems to be the only plausible explanation, for example, of General Alexeeff's insistence on the additional mobilization referred to in the last chapter. It is incredible that he, who was virtually Commander-in-Chief of our armies, could have been so utterly ignorant of the real feelings of the soldiery as not to have been aware of the sinister portent of the addition to their numbers of many new millions of men drawn from a war-weary peasantry, seething with discontent and hatred of the classes whom they held responsible for the war and its indefinite prolongation. This fateful measure could only have been devised as a grandiose gesture, intended to impress the Allies with the fervour of the Government's devotion to their cause and the magnitude of the resources of human material at its disposal, without, apparently, reflecting that the day might be near when this human material would object to the part of "cannon fodder" assigned to it.

Likewise nothing but similar atavistic influences could have accounted for the mentality which made it possible for some of our politicians to seek the countenance of foreign, albeit Allied, diplomacy in plotting the dethronement of

their Sovereign, whom they suspected, or pretended to suspect—a question which could not be answered in one sense or the other without impugning either their intelligence or their good faith—of carrying on, or suffering to be carried on, secret intrigues aiming at the conclusion of a separate peace with Germany. The fact of such relations having existed—explicable, of course, on the diplomatic side by the influence of the all-pervading war psychosis—is apparently alluded to by Dr. E. J. Dillon when he writes in his *Eclipse of Russia* :

For, say what we may, the blast that destroyed the monarchy and shattered the nation came directly from the Duma leaders, semi-consciously aided and abetted by the simple-minded representatives of the Entente, whom history may come to regard as drowsy, if not sleeping, partners of the active plotters.

It seems, however, that the Government, in spite of all their boastful assurances of readiness to carry on the war with redoubled energy, had conceived some doubts as to the disposition of the people in this regard, and had come to the conclusion that, in order to reanimate their obviously waning, or even totally vanished, fighting spirit, it was necessary to hold out to them some inducement supposedly powerful enough to reconcile them to the necessity of continuing to shed their blood, and that this could best be done by disclosing the real aims Russia was pursuing in the war.

In consequence of a decision in this sense arrived at, evidently after consultation with the Allies, the new Prime Minister, Mr. Trepoff, who in the meanwhile had replaced Stuermer, on the reassembling of the Duma on December 3rd, read a declaration, from the text of which, as cabled over by the Russia semi-official news agency and published in the New York papers of December 4, 1916, I quote the following two main points :

"We have concluded an agreement with our Allies, which establishes in the most definite manner the right of Russia to the Straits and Constantinople. Russians should know for what they are shedding their blood, and in accord with our Allies, announcement of this agreement is made to-day from this Tribune."

And further in regard to the Polish question: "One part of the task before us is to reconquer the Kingdom of Poland, temporarily detached by force of arms. But that is not enough. We must also wrest from our enemies territories formerly Polish, beyond the old frontier. We will then reconstitute Poland, free within its ethnographical boundaries, but inseparably united with Russia."

Well might the Allies have hesitated to consent to this official disclosure of Russia's war aims, which included the dismemberment, not only of Turkey but also of Prussia and Austria, from whom the former Polish territories—that is to say, Posen and Galicia—were to be wrested. Their consent to the satisfaction of these territorial ambitions of Russia necessarily implied the existence of similar concessions secretly made to them at the expense of enemy countries, and therefore invalidated the claim that the war was being waged to secure the "triumph of right over might," or to "end war," or to "destroy militarism."

This official disclosure was a most dangerous admission to be made in the hearing of the millions of naturally peaceable human beings who, amidst the horrors of modern warfare, were expected to continue fighting indefinitely in the belief that they were fighting to save the liberty of the world or to end war for ever. It, moreover, supplied the enemy Governments with a most welcome argument to rouse the fighting spirit of their peoples, by representing to them that, in the presence of the openly declared aims of one at least of their adversaries, nothing remained for them but to continue to fight to the bitter end if they wanted to save their countries from dismemberment and ruin.

The effect which this solemn disclosure of the Government's war aims produced on the minds of the Russian people—I mean, of course, the real people—was the very opposite to what had evidently been hoped for, if not expected. That the Government could have for a moment imagined that the people would be roused to any degree of enthusiasm by the prospect of having to fight for the potential conquest of Constantinople and the Straits, or the acquisition of Posen and Galicia, for the benefit of Poland, merely shows how unbridgeable is the gulf which in Russia separates the thin upper crust from the bulk of the nation.

What the Poles, who hoped for the realization of their national ideal—a reunited, independent Poland, as a result of the World War—may have thought of the announcement of the Russian Government's intentions in regard to their country, and of the acquiescence therein of the Allies, the mainstay of their hopes, had best be left to the imagination.

While the situation of affairs in Russia was, from week to week, almost from day to day, growing more and more alarming, those who, like myself, were anxiously scanning the horizon for any premonitory signs of coming peace were gladdened by two rays of hope, which in quick succession broke through the lowering war-clouds. They were the German Chancellor's note of December 12, 1916, announcing Germany's readiness to enter into peace negotiations, and the note of the Secretary of State, Mr. Lansing, conveying to the belligerent Powers President Wilson's proposal "that soundings be taken in order that all may learn, the neutrals with the belligerents, how near the haven of peace may be for which all mankind longs with an intense and increasing longing."

The relation of the propaganda Press to these timid attempts at initiating peace negotiations foreshadowed the attitude of the Governments concerned, and was characteristic of the prevailing war psychosis. The German announcement of readiness to enter into peace negotiations was declared to be "insincere," a "peace offensive," a "sham," a "war manœuvre," devised to entrap the Allies into negotiations, with the object of compelling them to conclude a "German peace," and similar expressions of disapproval, some of which subsequently found a complaisant echo in the collective reply to the German note, which made it abundantly clear that no beginning of peace negotiations was to be thought of.

It so happened that these notes were received when Mr. Pokroffsky, Comptroller of the Empire and also Member of the Upper House of our Legislature and, therefore, a colleague and personal acquaintance of mine, had just been appointed to the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs, which since the dismissal of Stuermer had remained vacant for some time. Being convinced that in his case I should not meet with the supercilious rebuff to which I had been accustomed

at the hands of his predecessors in office, I asked him to give me an opportunity to discuss with him the political situation, a request which was most readily granted in the same spirit in which it had been made. Mr. Pokroffsky was an open-minded, level-headed and well-meaning man, but, being entirely new to the office to which he had been unexpectedly appointed, he was naturally somewhat handicapped by his inexperience in the handling of intricate diplomatic affairs and by the consequent necessity of relying more than would otherwise have been unavoidable on the advice of his new subordinates.

In the course of two prolonged interviews which he very courteously granted me, I was enabled exhaustively to explain my views, and I brought away the impression that at heart he was inclined to share them but that he considered as hopeless any attempt at carrying out the policy I advocated, presumably on account not only of the insurmountable difficulties which he seemed to think we should encounter on the part of our Allies, but also of the opposition of our party leaders and evidently also of his own official advisers, all of whom were wedded to the policy which had brought Russia to the brink of the precipice and was preparing to push her into the abyss.

Mr. Pokroffsky's apprehension in regard to the probable attitude of our Allies was certainly not unfounded. It was evident that in all belligerent countries on both sides of the fence the "knock-out blow" point of view was gaining the upper hand over the inspirations of statesmanship. Moreover, there were then, in Great Britain as well as in France, those who believed that a weakened and dismembered Russia would best serve their countries' interests, partly as an elimination of potential rivalry in Asia, partly as an immunization from the danger of a possible Russo-German understanding in the future. There were, however, other and, one might have thought more powerful motives of a political and financial nature, which should have rendered desirable to our Allies the unimpaired power and greatness of the Russian Empire, and consequently should have moved them to help us in every way to prevent its impending collapse.

It is true, of course, that the adoption of the line of policy I advocated would have implied, in the first place, an entirely

open and unreserved avowal of the hopeless condition to which Russia had already been reduced by the war and which was going to be aggravated by its further prolongation ; and in the second place an unshakable firmness in insisting on the occasion furnished by the German and American notes being seized without delay for the initiation of negotiations for a general peace.

It is unquestionable also that the adoption of such a policy would have demanded of those who would have had to carry it out a moral courage and a fortitude in which they might have been deficient, not to mention that clean-cut solutions of momentous questions are usually repugnant to the mentality of politicians—not only in Russia. In any case, no agreement with our Allies on the lines I suggested could have been reached without delicate negotiations, which the new and quite inexperienced Minister of Foreign Affairs may have hesitated to conduct himself and been unwilling to entrust to any one of our Ambassadors in Allied countries. Be that as it may, nothing whatever was attempted to save the Empire from the catastrophe whose imminence only wilful blindness could fail to foresee.

Russia assented to the collective replies of the Allies to the German and American notes, which effectually closed the door to any hope of approaching peace. Mr. Pokroffsky read in the Duma a speech composed in the most approved war-propaganda style, winding up with the declaration that no premature peace could be concluded with an enemy “seeking a breathing-space by making deceitful offers of a permanent peace,” and lastly that “in this conviction Russia is in complete agreement with all her valiant Allies. We are all equally convinced of the vital necessity of carrying on the war to a victorious end, and no subterfuge by our enemies will prevent us from following this path to the end.”

In the text of this speech, as reported by cable and published in the New York papers, from which I have quoted the above, occurs, however, a passage which contains the whole truth in a nutshell. Mr. Pokroffsky is made to say : “In the event of failure [of their proposal] they will exploit at home the refusal of the Allies to accept peace in order to rehabilitate the tottering morale of their people.”

In other words, the perhaps expected and even hoped-for refusal was to bring grist to the mill of the German militarists. If that was the real object of the refusal, it must be admitted that it was successfully attained.

After listening to Mr. Pokroffsky's speech, the Duma passed a resolution "unanimously favouring a categorical refusal by the Allied Governments to enter under present conditions into any peace negotiations whatever." The resolution then goes on to say that the Duma "considers that the German proposals are nothing more than a fresh proof of the weakness of the enemy and a hypocritical act from which the enemy expects no real success, but by which he seeks to throw upon others the responsibility for the war and for what happened during it and to exculpate himself before public opinion in Germany."

Nothing could, probably, have been more welcome to the German militarists than to have the enemy deliberately walking into the trap which, according to this explanation by the Duma, had been set for them by the hypocritical and wily German.

These proceedings in the Duma were followed on December 25th by the issue of an Imperial order to the Army and Navy, from the text of which, as transmitted by the British Admiralty per Wireless Press, and published in the New York papers of December 28th, I quote the following :

The time for peace negotiations has not yet arrived. The enemy has not been driven out of the provinces he has occupied. Russia's attainment of the task created by the war—regarding Constantinople and the Dardanelles, as well as the creation of a free Poland from all the three of her now incomplete tribal districts—has not yet been guaranteed. To conclude peace at this moment would mean failure to utilize the fruits of the untold trials of the heroic Russian troops and fleet. These trials and the still more sacred memory of those noble sons of Russia who have fallen on the battlefield do not permit of thoughts of peace until final victory over our enemies. Who dares to think that he who brought about war shall have it in his power to conclude peace at any time he likes ?

Whether all these declarations were intended to placate our Allies, anxious to make sure of our participation in the prolongation of the war, or to conceal from them our actually critical position, or to "bluff" the enemy, or whether they

were inspired by a really sincere, albeit erroneous, conviction that by such means the fighting spirit of the nation could be aroused, I cannot undertake to determine.

The effect produced by them on a profoundly war-weary Army and people, may be imagined. Besides, it was to manifest itself very soon in a way apparently little expected by the authors of these bellicose declarations.

The new year, 1917, brought us the sanguinary *dénouement* of the disgraceful Rasputin episode, the resignation of Trepoff, the appointment to replace him as Prime Minister of Prince Golitzyn, an honourable and worthy man but politically a nonentity, and lastly the arrival of a Franco-Anglo-Italian delegation headed by Mr. Doumergue, Viscount Milner, and Signor Scialoja, the object of whose coming was not disclosed to the public. Since the publication by the Bolsheviks of the secret documents found by them in the archives of our Ministry of Foreign Affairs it has been said that during the sojourn at Petrograd of the aforesaid Allied delegation some agreement had been reached between the Russian and French Governments guaranteeing to France the return to her of Alsace and Lorraine, an exceptional position for her in the Saar Valley and the political separation from Germany and organization on a special basis of her possessions on the left bank of the Rhine, so as to make that river a solid strategic frontier against German aggression; and to Russia the right to a free hand in the settlement of her western frontiers. Not having seen any of these secret documents published by the Bolsheviks, I am not in a position to verify whether there has ever been any serious foundation for such rumours.

Since the resignation of Trepoff the whole power of the Government had practically fallen into the hands of Protopoff, and the singular way in which he sometimes used it gave rise to doubts as to his entire sanity.

Protopoff's share in the responsibility for the catastrophe which overtook the Government is undeniable, but there was no need of provoking, as he has been accused of doing, a revolution. The revolution was there already; it was in the hearts of the people, deadly sick of the war and sighing for peace—a fact which Allied as well as Russian war propaganda was endeavouring to conceal or to deny. It was not

an organized, but an instinctive, elemental force, this revolt of the people against the war. Its outbreak was not premeditated. It was spontaneous—one might say almost accidental. Its outbreak in the form in which it occurred was rendered possible by the presence in the fantastically overcrowded barracks of the capital of a horde of armed peasants (one of the products of the insane mobilization measure of the preceding year), some two to three hundred thousand reservists of the regiments of the Imperial Guards combating at the front. They were very sparsely officered and were merely by force of tradition and inertia submitting to some kind of loose and precariously maintained discipline.

The success of the outbreak was due to the only cause that renders successful revolutions possible, for no Government worthy of the name has ever been overthrown by a revolution save through its own incompetence, weakness and folly. Its success was hailed with general enthusiasm by the people—I mean, of course, the real people—who saw in it the end of the war, and by the "Intelligentzia" and the politicians, who expected to possess themselves for good of the power of the State and to be enabled to carry on the war to a victorious conclusion which would have justified the policy to which they were wedded.

Both the people and the "Intelligentzia" were disappointed in their hopes and expectations, and for the same reason: the unbridgeable gulf of mutual non-comprehension which separates the bulk of the nation from the educated classes—that same abnormal condition which has always been the curse of our country. For it was the failure to comprehend and to satisfy the imperious craving of the people for peace that caused the overthrow of the Imperial, as well as later on the Provisional, and lastly Kerensky's Coalition Government, and that literally threw the country into the arms of the Bolsheviks who promised the people what they were yearning for—Peace.

The Revolution, properly speaking, which actually and with the greatest ease overthrew the Government, from whose palsied hands power was let slip without any effort whatever to retain it, was not, as mentioned above, organized, nor was its outbreak apparently preconcerted with the leaders of the revolutionary parties. It was—such at least was my

impression—a spontaneous, anarchic uprising of the mutinous soldiery and of a revolutionary rabble of workmen from the numerous factories in the capital and suburbs. Its success was achieved in the simplest way by the disorderly soldiery of some regiments of the guard marching to the Palace of the Duma, which had just been dissolved by Imperial decree—one of Protopopoff's insane measures—not, by any means, with hostile intent, as some Duma members were said to have apprehended, but apparently with no other object than to acclaim the Duma and its President.

Owing to the complete self-effacement of the legitimate Government, all the power of the State seemed to have been literally thrust into the hands of the Duma and its President, Mr. Rodzianko, who for a few days became the most popular and, as far as appearances went, the most powerful personage of the country. These appearances, however, were deceptive. The Social-Democratic and Social-Revolutionary Parties, although apparently taken by surprise by the spontaneous outbreak of the Revolution, had nevertheless succeeded in the course of the very first day, March 12, 1917, in organizing a "Soviet" or Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies, which in the evening of the same day held its first sitting, in which some two hundred and fifty to three hundred of these deputies took part, in the Duma Hall of Session coolly appropriated by them.

"From the outset the Petrograd Soviet became the only body the authority of which was fully acknowledged by those who had supplied the element of physical force in bringing about the Revolution; that is to say, the garrison and factory hands of the capital"—I quote this sentence from Mr. Wilcox's book, because it states an uncontrovertible and illuminating fact in the most lucid and precise terms. The fact is illuminating inasmuch as it explains the reason why neither the Provisional Government of Prince Lwoff-Miliukoff nor the Coalition Government of Kerensky, although accepted by the nation and recognized by the Allied and Neutral Powers, ever possessed that fullness of power without which a Government is at best but a Government in name.

Nevertheless I venture to think that the unorganized, planless and leaderless outbreak might have been at once

summarily and successfully dealt with by some of the Duma leaders possessed of sufficient courage and energy, had they not been engaged themselves in a revolutionary conspiracy, to which Dr. E. J. Dillon refers in the above quoted passage of his *Eclipse of Russia* when he attributes the "blast that destroyed the Monarchy and shattered the nation" directly to the Duma leaders, omitting to mention among those who, in his opinion, "aided and abetted" them some of the leading Generals of the active Army, without whose connivance it would not have been possible to arrest the Imperial train on its way to Tsarskoje Selo at Pskow, the headquarters of a General commanding a whole group of armies, and to allow two Duma members to demand of their Sovereign that he abdicate his throne. These unfortunates, whose patriotism it would be unjust to question, were unable to realize that by their action they were sealing the doom of their country and to foresee that their names would go down to history branded with the maledictions of a nation. It must, however, be stated in justice to them that their aim was not by any means the destruction of the Monarchy, but merely the removal of the Sovereign, whom they presumably thought unwilling to continue the war, or incapable of continuing it successfully, and the placing on the throne of his young son under a suitable regency. That their plan, even if it had not been definitely foiled by the Grand Duke Michael's refusal to accept the throne—the Emperor had abdicated in his favour and not in that of his son—could have been successfully carried out, appears more than doubtful, because the Petrograd Soviet, although represented in the Provisional Government by only one of its members, Kerensky, had already acquired an overshadowing influence which reduced that Government to practical impotence.

From the very beginning there was a fundamental disagreement between the Soviet and the Government in regard to the momentous question of peace or war. The Soviet, relying on the support of the Army and Navy and the unmistakable will of the people, had pronounced itself in favour of the earliest possible conclusion of a general peace (not of a separate peace with Germany, but emphatically of a general peace) on the basis of the famous three principles: No annexations, no indemnities and self-determination of

nationalities. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and leading member of the Government, Miliukoff, on the contrary, assured the Allied Governments of Russia's unshakable determination to continue the war with the greatest energy until a final victory. This disagreement was to lead in the end to Miliukoff's resignation, without, however, materially improving the situation, as I shall explain presently.

In the meantime, although I had hardly any hope of bringing Miliukoff round to my view of the urgent necessity of beginning negotiations for a general peace, I sought an interview with him as soon as I learned that our Ambassador to the United States had tendered his resignation, and offered to undertake without a day's delay a mission to Washington, if he thought it desirable, considering the extreme importance of the attitude which the United States Government might assume in the question of bringing about the end of the war. He told me frankly that he mistrusted my politics, in which he was unquestionably quite right—for my views were indeed the very opposite of his, and I would under no conceivable circumstances have consented to conceal from the Government of the United States what I held to be the truth. But I suggested to him that since after all we could both of us have but one aim, the good of our country, we might perhaps by an exchange of views and a thorough discussion of the momentous question at issue, reach an agreement. He seemed at first to be inclined to assent to this proposal, but nothing came of it and I did not meet him again.

The next step I undertook when, in the beginning of May, it became evident that Kerensky was the master-mind in the Government. Through a friend who had been a client of Kerensky's in a lawsuit and who had kept up friendly relations with him, an interview between us was arranged. It took place at my friend's house, and, as it happened, on the very night when, at a Cabinet meeting, as Kerensky told me, two momentous decisions had just been taken after prolonged and presumably stormy discussions: to form a Coalition Government of socialistic and bourgeois elements and to definitely break with the policy of Miliukoff, Sazonoff and Iswolsky. This latter decision I could only welcome, as it was this policy that had brought Russia to the verge of ruin, and after a thorough discussion of the question at

issue I left under the impression that the necessary negotiations with our Allies would be initiated without delay in order to come to an agreement as to the conditions upon which a general peace could be concluded.

A few days later Mr. Terestchenko, a young multimillionaire, who seemed to have taken up revolutionary politics more or less as an expensive sport, was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. I was not personally acquainted with him at all, but realizing that as he was quite inexperienced in matters of diplomacy he might find himself handicapped by his unavoidable dependence on the collaboration of his future subordinates, who were all, as was natural, devoted adherents of the very policy from which the Government had decided to dissociate itself, I wrote to him offering to place at his disposal all the knowledge and experience I possessed which might be of use to him, and enclosing a paper I had drawn up in which I succinctly outlined the diplomatic steps I considered it necessary to be taken without delay, and requesting him to submit it to the Government or to enable me to report it myself to a Cabinet meeting with such supplementary explanations as might be required.

No answer was returned to this letter. Having waited about a fortnight for further developments, I made up my mind to call public attention to this matter, which I considered to be of supreme importance for the salvation of the country, and embodied the substance of the above-mentioned paper, with some amplifications, in an article which the *Den*, a mildly socialistic paper, had the courage to print.

Having set my views before the public by means of my article in the *Den*, I found that the three following ones, meant as a complement to the first, although in each case set in type and sent to me for approval, could not be printed, the requisite courage having apparently failed the editors. Thereupon, being determined not to leave a stone unturned in the pursuit of my self-imposed quixotic task, I began a round of calls on all the members of the Cabinet in succession. I found all of them quite innocent of any knowledge of diplomatic matters, and I never learned whether my endeavours to enlighten them had produced the desired effect. One of them, and it seemed to me the most intelligent one of them all, after listening to me attentively, astonished

me not a little by maintaining that the Minister of Foreign Affairs was proceeding on the very lines I suggested in proposing to the Allied Governments to proceed jointly to a "revision of the war aims." To this I demurred, trying to make him see that it was not a question of revising so-called "war aims," but of seeking to come to an agreement with our Allies on the subject of basic conditions upon which we might conclude jointly a general peace with the enemy Powers, and that such an agreement could only be reached by delicate negotiations which could not possibly be carried on by exchanges of published notes or parliamentary declarations primarily meant for home consumption. I could not help, however, admiring the skill with which Mr. Terestchenko, who had evidently fallen under the influence of the ideas of his predecessors, had succeeded in making his colleagues believe that he was actually carrying out the policy which the Cabinet had at first decided to adopt.

Then came the news of the departure from America of Mr. Root's mission, sent apparently for the purpose of encouraging Russia to continue the war with greater energy—a mission whose failure I knew was certain and could only lead to mutual irritation. I learned of it with painful consternation, because I realized how hopelessly the Government of the United States had been influenced by the current misconception of the real condition of affairs in Russia and of the real feelings of the Russian people, fostered by war propaganda, by the deceptive assurances of our diplomacy, and the vapourings of our subsidized Press and of our party leaders, whom Allied diplomacy in Petrograd was wont to consider the only reliable source of information on Russian affairs.

During the sojourn of the American mission in Petrograd I most earnestly requested to be given an opportunity of laying before its members my views on the war, on the true meaning of the Revolution, and on the actual condition of the country. Such an opportunity, however, was not vouchsafed to me. This I regret more than words can express.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

First news of the Revolution—Some personal experiences—Am offered Governorship of Finland—Situation in Finland—Blindness of the Allies—My efforts towards peace.

It was my intention to relate in this chapter some of my personal experiences in the first days of the Revolution, and not being in possession of any diaries or notes, as we had left behind everything except wearing apparel in our flight from that combination of prison and madhouse yclept "Soviet Russia," I resorted to the files of the *New York Times* in order to refresh my memory as to the dates on which some events had taken place.

The first mention of the Revolution I found in the issue of that paper of March 15, 1917, in the shape of a series of cablegrams, most of them dated from London, some of the same date and some of the day before, the Revolution having taken place on the 12th.

The very headlines printed on the first page of the *New York Times*, on top of the first column of a long series of cablegrams, show the fatal misconception of the real meaning of the Russian Revolution which prevailed among the representatives at Petrograd of the Press as well as of the diplomacy of Allied countries. They ran as follows :

LONDON HAILS REVOLUTION.

EXPECTED TSAR'S OVERTHROW AND SEES BRIGHTER PROSPECT FOR THE ALLIES.

THINK THE COUP DECISIVE.

WELL-INFORMED OBSERVERS BELIEVE THE PATRIOTIC WAR PARTY HAS MADE ITS CONTROL SECURE.

FEAR NO SEPARATE PEACE.

WITH WEAK RULER DEPOSED AND PRO-GERMAN ADVISERS OUSTED THEY PREDICT NEW VICTORIES.

On the second page I found another cablegram from London, dated March 15th, under the caption :

COMMONS TOLD OF ABDICATION. REVOLUTION DUE TO RUSSIAN PURPOSE TO FIGHT WAR OUT, SAYS BONAR LAW.

In the text of the cablegram giving an extract from Mr. Bonar Law's speech in the House of Commons, he is made to say :

There is some comfort for us in the comparative tranquillity with which the change was conducted. Here is also real comfort that all the Government's information shows that the movement was not in any sense directed toward an effort to secure peace by Russia. On the contrary, the discontent was not against the Government for carrying on the war, but for not carrying it on with that efficiency and energy which the people had expected.

That such a fundamentally erroneous idea of the causes and effect of the Revolution that had taken place in Petrograd should have been conceived at first in Allied countries is perhaps not surprising. The wish is sometimes father to the thought. And the Allied diplomacy as well as the representatives of the Allied Powers at Petrograd were handicapped in their task of forming a correct judgment on Russian affairs, on the one hand by their ignorance of the Russian language and their non-comprehension of the mentality and of the true sentiments and aspirations of the Russian people, and on the other hand by their habit of relying for their enlightenment mainly, if not exclusively, on such information as would reach them through their particular friends and adherents among the Duma leaders and their following ; in other words, on one-sided information derived from political circles which, although either prejudiced or deluded themselves, were being mistaken for the only authoritative exponents of the nation's feelings and wishes.

But there was one feature in the outbreak of the Russian Revolution which, one would think, should have opened the eyes of even the most superficial observer of the event to the fact that the Revolution meant, not the advent of an improved or even simply a new form of government, but nothing more nor less than the advent of anarchy, at first in a comparatively mild form, but which from week to week—nay,

from day to day—was bound to become more accentuated ; and that, therefore, all expectations based on the overthrow of the Imperial Government were necessarily doomed to disappointment.

That feature was the leading part assumed from the very first days of the Revolution by a so-called " Soviet " of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates, organized in haste by professional revolutionists, which had established its headquarters in the Taurida Palace, and was holding its meeting in the hall of sittings of the Duma. Both the Provisional Executive Committee of the Duma and the Provisional Government which it had been suffered to appoint with the consent of the Soviet were never for a moment anything else but a Government in name, the real power resting with the Soviet, the only body whose authority was being fully acknowledged by the forces that had achieved the Revolution, the mutinous soldiery and the revolutionary workmen.

In this connection I cannot help quoting from an article I have just come across in one of the New York dailies, the truly prophetic words uttered by the late Count Witte in a conversation with the distinguished author of that article at a dinner given in honour of the Russian Plenipotentiaries by Mr. Melville E. Stone, of the Associated Press, a few days after the conclusion of the Treaty of Portsmouth.

The world should be surprised (Count Witte is reported to have said) that we have any Government in Russia, not that we have an imperfect Government. With many nationalities, many languages and a nation largely illiterate, the marvel is that the country can be held together even by autocracy. Remember one thing: if the Tsar's Government falls, you will see absolute chaos in Russia, and it will be many a long year before you see another Government able to control the mixture that makes up the Russian nation.

I shall not attempt to give here a description of the sensational events of the first days of the Revolution. That has been done, with far greater fullness and accuracy than I could command, by the very able and distinguished correspondent of the London *Times* at Petrograd, Mr. Robert Wilton, in his interesting book, *Russia's Agony*. No one who has not lived through a revolution in his own country can possibly realize the tragic meaning of the sinking of the

heart one experiences in feeling that, so to speak, the bottom has suddenly dropped out of everything. Nor can I attempt to convey in feeble words an impression of such an experience which I should not wish my worst enemy to have to go through. But I may relate some episodes from my personal adventures in those days which will serve to illustrate the chaotic conditions brought about at once by the overthrow of the Imperial Government.

It was the third day of the Revolution, March 14, 1917. I was at luncheon with my fellow-lodgers in one of the erstwhile Imperial Yacht Club's bedrooms reserved for the use of members, where I had my bachelor quarters when separated from my family. These bedrooms, five in number, were situated in a wing of the club-house on the second floor, opening on a corridor, and the windows overlooking the courtyard. The club-rooms on the first floor were closed because of the disorder and frequent firing in the street, so that we were having our meals in one of our bedrooms. My four companions were all military men—three Generals and a Captain of a guard regiment—all men of social prominence: a former Governor-General of one of our outlying dominions; a Division Commander; a near relative of one of our Allied Sovereigns; and a member of one of the leading families of the Polish nobility—but all of them innocent of any connection whatever with politics of any kind. We had just finished our meal and I had returned to my room, when our apartment was invaded by a noisy crowd of some twenty soldiers and sailors, armed with bayonets and pistols, who declared with shouts and threats that they had come to arrest the "Generals" and to take them to the Duma. I had left the door of my room open on purpose to avoid the appearance of trying to hide. One of the soldiers looked into my room, but seeing that I was a civilian, withdrew. After some noisy altercation my fellow-lodgers put on their overcoats and were marched downstairs into the street, where a lorry was waiting to take them to the Duma. But an ugly mob had collected in front of the house, and, hurling invectives at the "blood-suckers," insisted on their being marched off on foot. They reached the Taurida Palace after a march of some two or three miles through the snow and slush characteristic of Petrograd streets in early spring, all the while exposed to the insults

and imprecations of the populace. As good luck would have it, they met on the steps of the palace Mr. Gutchkoff, the Minister of War in the Provisional Government, who happened to be personally acquainted with one of them, and who not only had them liberated at once, but brought them back to the club in his automobile. I would mention here incidentally that having deposited my friends at the door of the clubhouse, he continued on his way farther down the same street, where some desultory firing was going on, with the result that his aide-de-camp, young Prince W., an officer of one of the guard regiments, was killed by his side by a stray bullet.

After my fellow-lodgers had been carried off by the soldiers who had come to arrest them, I was left alone, our servants having disappeared, and fancied that the trouble had blown over as far as I was concerned. This illusion, however, was soon to be dispelled. Some eight or ten of the original band of soldiers, among whom seemed to be also a couple of sailors, after having seen their comrades carry off their prisoners, returned to the scene of their exploit for the purpose, evidently, of finding out whether some loot could not be secured from the rooms of the presumably wealthy bourgeois. They had no difficulty in invading our apartment, the servant having neglected to lock the entrance door before running away by the back stairs; and presently I found myself confronted by one of the band, who entered my room with a drawn sword, but looked so silly and sheepish that I laughingly asked him whether he had really come to cut my throat; whereupon he respectfully said that he had come to look for concealed arms, and when I had shown him that there were none hidden under my bed, he discreetly withdrew.

In the meantime the others had begun to search the rooms vacated by their occupants, opening their wardrobes, drawers and boxes, and appropriating such small articles as struck their fancy. These proceedings occupied considerable time amidst much boisterous noise, shouting and apparent quarrelling. Curiosity made me go to see what was going on. I went out into the corridor and looked into the room of my left-hand neighbour, a brilliant young cavalry officer, and there I found two soldiers, one of whom was in the act of putting on my young friend's magnificent regulation boots,

having thrown into a corner his own dirty footwear. My appearance in the corridor attracted the other invaders, and one of them, who seemed to be their leader, told me in a gruff and threatening tone that their orders were to arrest me as well, and that I had better make ready to accompany them to the Duma. Seeing that in the presence of superior force protesting would have been useless, I began with some deliberation to get into my fur coat, when one of the soldiers approached me from behind and whispered in my ear : " That's all right ; don't be in a hurry." There evidently were divided counsels, and somewhat reassured as to my immediate fate, I returned to my room, took off my fur coat and sat down in my favourite corner in expectation of further developments. It so happened that my right-hand neighbour had a few days before removed from his room a bulky trunk and had it placed in the corridor between the doors to our rooms. The marauders had procured an axe and had begun hammering away at the top of the trunk, when instinctive indignation moved me to interfere. I went out into the corridor and told the men, in as calmly authoritative a manner as I thought I might assume, that the trunk they were trying to open belonged to a foreign prince, a near relative of one of our Allied Sovereigns, and that they had better respect at least his property. They responded by threatening shouts : " Get out of here ; this is none of your business." I had to retire with as good grace as I could muster, but I had barely reached my favourite corner again when I heard one of the soldiers shouting at the others in a voice betokening, evidently, sincere indignation : " For shame ! This is a political action, and you behave like a lot of scoundrelly bandits ! " However, my uncautious interference had excited the ire of the marauders, and after some noisy and rather violent discussion the echo of which reached me in my retreat, the whole crowd rushed into my room, led by a particularly villainous-looking individual, and I realized that things had begun to look decidedly blue for me, when suddenly a young distinguished-looking man in a reserve officer's uniform appeared in the doorway, and, the soldiers having instinctively subsided into silence in the presence of a superior, asked me who I was. Upon being told, he at once declared that he knew and respected my name, that I need not be arrested, and that he

would be personally responsible for me. A violent altercation ensued, the leader of the crowd behaving with the utmost insolence and insisting on carrying me off to the Duma. But the majority of the soldiers sided with the officer, and he succeeded at last in causing them to depart, having shown them a certificate which he then and there had made out on a sheet of my letter paper and signed in their presence. This curious document, which I have preserved as a memento of those troubled days, runs as follows :

March 1 (that is to say 14, new style), 1917.

By order of the Provisional Government, the Yacht Club, as well as the room occupied by Baron Rosen in the building, having been searched and no arms having been found, Baron Rosen is allowed to remain in his room.

Patrol of the Reserve Division of Armoured Cars,

(Signed) LIEUTENANT DEKHTIAREFF.

My young benefactor, who was a student of the University of Petrograd, then explained that the Military Commission of the Duma had sent him in an armoured car with a couple of men to verify whether in our part of the town the search for arms by the soldiers was being effected in an orderly way ; that in passing he had noticed that a crowd had collected in front of the club-house, and that, suspecting something to be happening in the house, he had stopped his car, run upstairs and arrived just in the nick of time to save me from being arrested and carried off by my tormentors. I wonder if this young man has escaped the cruel fate that has overtaken so many thousands of deserving people of his class. If he has been spared to live a life of honour and usefulness to the country and the nation, and if these lines should ever meet his eyes, I beg he will believe that his timely intervention at a critical moment will always be remembered with profound gratitude by their author.

Late in the evening of the same day, the third day of the Revolution, we inhabitants of the club chambers were destined to meet with another, and this time less alarming, experience. We were quietly, over tea and cigars, exchanging our impressions on the events of the day, when there was a furious knocking at the door and our servant, in great alarm, evidently under the impression of the afternoon's invasion,

rushed in to inquire what he was to do. He was, of course, ordered to open the door immediately, and we all went out into the corridor to see what was going to happen. When the door opened we beheld a rather surprising sight : two burly soldiers with rifles and bayonets led by what at first sight appeared to be a young woman disguised in male attire awkwardly handling a large Army revolver. The young woman, however, turned out to be a very nice and well-bred boy of fifteen or sixteen, who in the most polite language explained that he had been sent by the Duma Commission on Military Affairs, in charge of a dozen men, in a motor lorry, to search for and to collect arms of every kind that might be found in private houses and apartments in our part of the town ; that they had not yet finished their task, which was to be taken up again the following morning ; and he asked whether we would consent to put him and his soldiers up for the night on the premises of the club. Under the circumstances the best we could do was to comply with this request, and we sent for the steward of the club, who declared his willingness to let our unexpected guests occupy for the night the bowling alley, and even to have some supper prepared for them.

The following morning I went downstairs to see how things were going on, and found that the soldiers had been behaving themselves with propriety, and although quite innocent of any show of military discipline, seemed to acquiesce in the unpretentious leadership of the boy who had been placed at their head and whom they addressed as " Comrade " (*Tovaristch* in Russian). Taking aside the youngster, I asked him how it had come about that he, a mere boy, had been placed in charge of these men, every one of them old enough to have been his father. This is what he told me :

When it had been decided (evidently under strong pressure, or rather by command of the " Soviet ") to disarm the population, the Duma Commission on Military Affairs had taken steps to send out all over the town groups of soldiers in motor lorries for the purpose of searching for and confiscating arms found in private dwellings. Being afraid, however, of entrusting this task to an uncontrolled soldiery, and as there were no officers available, many of whom had been murdered by their soldiers on the very first day of the

Revolution, and the rest having been disarmed by its order or being in hiding, the Commission had applied to the University and to the higher schools, calling upon volunteers among their pupils who would be willing to take charge of the groups of soldiers to be sent out ; our young friend, being a pupil of the Petrograd Commercial College, had volunteered for this service and had not, so far, experienced any difficulty with the men of his command.

I have dwelt at such length on the apparently immaterial details of these occurrences because they shed light not only on the general mentality of the Russian peasant-soldiers, which so strangely combined truly sadic lust of murder and torture applied to their regular officers with good-natured acquiescence in the occasional leadership of mere University students, and even schoolboys, but also on their state of mind in the initial stages of the Revolution, when they were still dazed and bewildered by the unexpected results they had themselves achieved, and were not yet awake to the consciousness of having entirely at their mercy the capital of the Empire—nay, the Empire itself—and more particularly the hated educated classes, whom they held responsible for the war and the misery of its indefinite prolongation. This consciousness was to come to them later and was to be skilfully and ruthlessly exploited by the sanguinary bandits and demented fanatics of Bolshevism for the purpose of seizing power over a helplessly unresisting nation which they proceeded to enslave by a regime of terrorism such as the world has never before seen, reducing the Russian people to a state of deepest abasement and irretrievable ruin.

A few days later I had occasion to visit the so-called “Palais Marie,” the home of what had been the Council of the Empire, and found the beautiful vestibule of the palace occupied by a most disreputable-looking lot of some twenty to thirty soldiers, who were lounging on benches and chairs they had brought in, and who presented a lamentable spectacle of revolutionary *sans gêne* and contempt for discipline. An official of the Chancellerie of the Council, where I had some business to transact, told me that the palace had been occupied by the soldiery in the beginning of the Revolution presumably for the same reason that prompted them to invade the Duma ; that so far they had not done any serious damage

to the State apartments and the hall of sittings on the main floor of the building ; that it had not been possible as yet to get rid of their unwelcome presence, but that nevertheless the members of the Provisional Government were using the State apartments for their meetings ; and, lastly, that at that very moment they were assembled there for the purpose of receiving the representative of a foreign Power who was to announce to them their recognition by his Government.

I could not help reflecting with profound humiliation on the thoughts which would be bound to cross the mind of that distinguished foreigner, however friendly disposed, at the sight of such a disorderly band of armed men, which by no stretch of the imagination could be taken for a guard to present military honours to an ambassador.

It would seem difficult to explain how it was possible that, in the presence of similar evidences—and there were many and more serious ones—of the Provisional Government's helpless inability to maintain even an outward show of really controlling the situation, Allied diplomacy could have acclaimed that shadowy Government with favour and could have based optimistic expectations on its advent. The observant, sharp-witted and level-headed wife of a naval attaché to the American Embassy has, in her recently published *Intimate Letters from Petrograd*, written in 1917 and 1918, expressed her perplexity in this regard in the following somewhat cruel terms :

I have determined upon a new definition of optimism in Russia. An optimist is an alleged diplomat who is wilfully blind.

The reproach of wilful blindness, fully merited by Allied diplomacy in the sequel of events, when it played such a sinister part in shaping the destiny of our unfortunate country, could hardly be applied to the illusions entertained at first, inasmuch as these illusions were in the fullest measure shared not only by those political circles from which that diplomacy was wont to derive its information on Russian affairs, but also, indeed, by the majority of the educated classes in the country. After the lamentable collapse of the last Government of incapables under the Imperial regime, the advent to what was supposed would be real

power of a Provisional Government, composed with one exception of leaders of the moderate Conservative and Liberal parties, all men of proved ability in various walks of life, of high character and unquestioned integrity, was hailed by public opinion with unfeigned satisfaction and even enthusiasm. Their fatal lack of backbone, manifested in their acceptance as a fellow-member in their Government of Kerensky, the leader of one of the revolutionary parties whose aim was, and always had been, the destruction of the Empire for the purpose of clearing the ground for their socialistic millennium, was not at once realized in its inevitable bearing on the future development of events. Nor was their failure to understand the underlying meaning of the revolutionary outbreak, and to gauge aright the real feelings of the immense bulk of the nation, comprehended as what it really was—a total lack of that true statesmanship which places the satisfaction of the crying needs of the people above the gratification of personal ambitions and of the aims of party policies. Moreover, they were handicapped not only by their inexperience in statecraft, for which no blame could be attached to them, since they had never been given an opportunity to participate in the handling of affairs of State, but also by their inexperience in dealing with the complicated mechanism of the huge bureaucratic machine. This machine continued, indeed, to function by that force of inertia which keeps all institutions running for some time after the guiding power is gone. But it was bound to and did break down in the end, leaving the country in a state of complete anarchy.

Among my personal adventures of the first days of the Revolution was one which I have not yet mentioned. It was on the day following after my attempted arrest by some soldiers that I was sent for by the Provisional Government and requested to accept the post of Governor-General of Finland, where my name enjoyed some popularity on account of the position I had taken up in the Council of the Empire in defence of the constitutional rights of the Finnish people. I told the member of the Duma who approached me on the subject in the name of the Provisional Government that I held it to be the duty of every good citizen to place his services unreservedly at the disposal of that Government which evidently stood between the country and anarchy

as the only hope of the re-establishment of law and order, and that, therefore, I unhesitatingly agreed to undertake the task it was proposed to entrust to me. At the same time I pointed out to him the very serious misgivings I felt as to the possibility of a successful accomplishment of such a mission, not, of course, on account of any difficulties to be encountered on the part of the Finnish population, which, after the complete restoration of the Finnish constitution immediately conceded by the Provisional Government, would, I felt sure, prove entirely loyal, but on account of the unruly disposition prevailing among our soldiery stationed in Finland, and especially among the crews of the numerous vessels of the fleet wintering in the harbour of Helsingfors, of the existence of which I had convinced myself by personal observation in my frequent visits to the Finnish capital, where my family had found a temporary home since the autumn of 1915.

I must say here that if this offer had come to me before the war I should have accepted with real enthusiasm the task of being the instrument of reconciliation between the Empire and the Grand Duchy on the basis of the unreserved recognition and the fullest restitution of the constitutional rights of Finland, because of my profound conviction that such a reconciliation was imperatively demanded by every consideration of sound statesmanship, and was of the utmost importance to Russia no less than to Finland.

I will say also that I was perfectly sincere in my immediate acceptance of the offer made to me, evidently on the spur of the moment, on behalf of the revolutionary Provisional Government and emanating presumably from some of its more liberal-minded members. But knowing the mentality prevailing not only in our bureaucratic circles, but generally speaking in the world of our political "Intelligentzia," priding itself upon its freedom from bureaucratic prejudices and pettinesses, I had not a moment's doubt that nothing would come of it after all.

Indeed, that same evening I was called up on the telephone by a friend of mine, who told me that one of the leaders of the Cadet Party (Constitutional Democratic Party) who was with him at the time and who, although not personally acquainted with me, was greatly in favour of my appoint-

ment to the post of Governor-General of Finland, and had come to ask him to ascertain from me whether it was true that I had written a letter to the former Emperor advising the conclusion of a "separate peace" with Germany, the point having been raised in the party council by some one opposed to my appointment. I replied that I had never written any letter to the Emperor, and that if I had done so I should certainly not have advocated the conclusion of a separate peace with Germany.

This story of a letter supposed to have been written by me to the Emperor could only have related to the paper mentioned in a preceding chapter, of which I had handed a copy to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sazonoff, and which did not contain even an allusion to the conclusion of such a peace, let alone the tender of advice to that effect.

A couple of days later, as I had expected from the first, I was informed that my proposed appointment had been cancelled, the member of the Duma who had approached me on behalf of the Provisional Government explaining in his letter to me that on second thought the question had once more been discussed in the Council of Ministers and that the majority of the members of the Government had concluded that at such a time the appointment to the post of Governor-General of Finland of a person bearing a "not entirely Russian name" would be undesirable.

I must own that this decision of the Government, far from causing me any disappointment, gave me a feeling of profound relief, because I was entirely convinced that the position which, as a matter of patriotic duty, I had consented to fill, would in the nearest future become absolutely untenable since the Revolution in Russia was bound to have its counterpart in Finland.

At first the Russian Revolution was hailed by the ruling classes in Finland with some apparent satisfaction, not perhaps unmingled with serious apprehensions as to future developments, because it meant the end of the oppressive regime unconstitutionally maintained by the Russian bureaucracy and the complete restoration of the country's autonomy and constitution, at once unreservedly conceded by the Provisional Government. At any rate, when I had occasion to visit Helsingfors in the second week of the Revolution I

was struck by the sight of quite a large number of Russian national flags, which since the days of the extremely popular Emperor and Grand Duke Alexander II had not been seen flying in Finland's capital, except from the Governor-General's palace—a sight as gratifying as it was humiliating to a Russian fresh from witnessing the shameful spectacle of his own country's capital, where the national colours were no longer tolerated and where from thousands of houses was seen flying the sinister red flag of Socialism—emblem of bloodshed and revolution.

In order to understand the attitude of the Finnish, or rather Finlandish, bourgeoisie (since it was composed of both nationalities, Swedish as well as Finnish, with a preponderance of the former) one must keep in mind that Finland's connection with the Russian State—geographically natural—had been economically of the greatest advantage to the country to whose trade and industry it had opened unrestrictedly a market of illimited capacity in the immense extent of its Russian "hinterland," and had never been felt as a hardship under the wise and liberal rule of the first Emperors—Grand Dukes Alexander I, Nicholas I and Alexander II. Finnish separatism, whose birth and growth the Russian bureaucracy's oppressive policy was supposed to prevent or to counteract, had really been the direct outcome of that very policy with whose passing the main compelling motive for aiming at separation from Russia had ceased to exist.

It was, of course, not surprising that the Finnish Socialists should have welcomed the Russian Revolution as a powerful aid in realizing their aim at bringing about a revolution in their own country. It was, indeed, not long before our mutinous soldiers and sailors, who had at once organized "Soviets" on the most approved pattern, and had been freely murdering, and often cruelly torturing, their officers, had concluded an alliance with the Finnish Socialist Red Guards—an alliance which, after the withdrawal from Finland of most of the Russian troops, led to, or rather was followed by, the outbreak of civil war between the Finnish Red Guards, assisted by Russian revolutionary elements, and Finnish White Guards composed of volunteers drawn from the bourgeoisie, at first with the aid—soon withdrawn—of some German troops, who had been landed in

Finland, and later with the co-operation of a brigade of Swedish volunteers.

Finland's bourgeoisie—to its great credit and honour be it said—had found in its own midst the courage, the resources and the energy not only to resist the onslaught of revolutionary Socialism, but, with very little external aid, to defeat it and to save the country from the fate that has overtaken unfortunate Russia.

Foreseeing the impending outbreak of revolution and civil war in Finland, I had in time caused my family to move from Helsingfors to Petrograd, where they found in one of the few still open hotels a precarious shelter, open to sudden nocturnal invasions and searches for "arms" by the revolutionary soldiery, and where they remained until in May 1918 it became possible for us to escape from the Socialist paradise and the doomed capital of what had been the Russian Empire.

To those who wish to form a vivid idea of what life in a town cursed with a state of revolution really is like I recommend the perusal of Mrs. Pauline S. Crosley's fascinatingly interesting volume, *Intimate Letters from Petrograd*.

The blindness displayed by our Allies in their policy in regard to Russia, before as well as after the Revolution, is, of course, undeniable, since the outcome of this policy is there to prove it—an outcome as fatal to Russia as it must in the end prove disadvantageous to our former Allies themselves, and which, therefore, could not possibly have been deliberately aimed at by them. To attribute the blindness of their policy to mere "wilfulness" would be neither satisfactory as an explanation nor would it be fair to the statesmen who devised and conducted it in what they believed to be the best interests of their countries. Whether this belief has been justified by events they will determine for themselves. But it stands to reason that their "wilfulness" in deliberately shutting their eyes to conditions which were bound to defeat in the end the very aims of their policy and which to them no less than to independent observers must have appeared quite evident, could not but have had some determining and perhaps even compelling causes.

Among these determining causes the first place must be assigned to the attitude of the various Governments—

Imperial as well as "Provincial" under Prince Lwoff's presidency, and lastly "Coalition" under Kerensky—with whom they had to deal, and who, all of them, in disregard of the country's crying need of peace, of the manifest unwillingness of the people to stay any longer in the fight, and of the resultant gradual voluntary "demobilization" of the Army, which in reality had set in, although carefully concealed, already towards the end of 1916, were constantly assuring and continued to the last moment to assure our Allies of their unshakable determination to continue the war with the greatest energy and vigour until a final victory was achieved. Of their earnest desire to do so there could be no question, although the sincerity of their own belief in their ability to carry through such a policy might well have been doubted. Therefore the solemn character of their repeated official assurances, however sceptically they may have been received, furnished the Allies, who were bent on the continuation of the war at any cost, with a sufficient and welcome ground for insisting on the realization of these assurances to the fullest extent. But in exercising such pressure by persuasion, flattery, and lastly by comminatory joint representations, they seemed not to realize sufficiently that what ailed all these Governments they were dealing with—the Imperial Government in the last months of its existence no less than its revolutionary successors—was that they were Governments only in name, bereft of real power since the complete disorganization of the huge bureaucratic machinery and the disintegration of the Army which accompanied the prolonged death-throes of the Imperial regime had been succeeded by a condition of revolutionary anarchy, gradually growing in intensity and presaging the final catastrophe. They were being swept along helplessly and semi-consciously on a current of elemental forces whose irresistible nature they failed to realize—a current which they neither commanded the power to stem nor had the wisdom and ability to deflect into the only possible channel of safety.

I cannot undertake to say whether or not any one of these successive Governments, composed all of them of elements swayed by various degrees of Conservative, Liberal or Socialistic doctrinairianism, and belonging to the same "Intelligentzia" whose separation from the

masses of the people has been the bane of modern Russia since Peter the Great—whether any one of them at any time had political insight enough to comprehend that under existing circumstances the only Government that could ever hope to become a Government in fact, wielding the plenitude of power, and not in name merely, would be a Government willing to bring to the people what they were clamouring for ; that is to say, peace in any shape or form. If they possessed such insight, they lacked the courage to act upon it, thereby working not only their own downfall but the ruin of the country, deliberately abandoned to the tender mercies of those who had both the insight and the determination to translate it into action and who were thus enabled to seize real power which they to this hour exercise with a sanguinary ruthlessness unexampled in the history of the world.

It was not unnatural that the Allies should have at first welcomed and treated as Russia's coming and at last real statesmen the members of the Provisional Government whose advent to power they had—if not "aided and abetted," as Dr. E. J. Dillon has it—evidently hoped for and favoured. Did not Russian public opinion itself, on the whole, share this illusion before these men had shown their utter inability to deal with the critical situation in which the country found itself placed through the war and the Revolution, an inability due not only to their own incompetence but also to the fact that they never at any time had been really free agents. But it is hardly credible that Allied statesmen could have taken seriously the sinister farce of the dictatorship of that glorified Russian Poo Bah, Kerensky, at once Dictator, Prime Minister and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Army and of the Navy, who by the inspired Press in Allied countries was hailed as the greatest statesman of Russia, the coming Man and Saviour of his country. Nor could they have failed to realize that Russia was drawing ever nearer to a state of anarchy and dissolution from which nothing could save her but the conclusion of a general peace—an eventuality they were anxious to avoid for reasons that had nothing to do with any altruistic consideration for the welfare of Russia and her people, which, indeed, they were not bound to entertain. But Kerensky and his honest, simple-minded, and, like him-

self, quite inexperienced associates were just the elements that could be made pliant instruments of the policy of the Allies, aiming at the reconstitution and maintenance in efficiency of the Russian front, which was palpably melting away, in the mistaken belief in the possibility of such an achievement.

Not being minded to await in mute resignation the doom of my country, I devoted myself entirely to the thankless task of fighting with word and pen the fatal blindness and irresolution which prevented the adoption of the only course compatible with her honour and dignity which could lead to the country's salvation. I never ceased until the very eve of the November Revolution, and regardless of the rebuffs I was meeting with, my efforts in seeking to be given a hearing by the men in whose inexperienced hands was placed the fate of our unfortunate country. I met with similar treatment at the hands of the Press which, following the example of the Press in all belligerent countries, and evidently from the same motives of misunderstood patriotism, was suppressing all independent opinion which would not minister to the prevailing and artificial war psychology. Out of a number of articles which I wrote as events were progressing, only the first could be printed in one of the important newspapers, to the readers of which I wished to address myself. The remaining ones I was finally compelled to print and to issue in pamphlet form under the title *Peace or War at Any Cost*, in the hope that in this shape they might reach at least a limited circle of readers. The following quotation from one of these articles speaks for itself:

What the country requires above all in this hour of her trial is the close and firm union of all her loyal sons. But no such union is possible as long as the "masses" are under the spell of Utopian doctrines of Socialism and the "classes" are obstinately wedded to the idea of "war at any cost," utterly abhorrent to the bulk of the nation and most of all to the soldiery. Still, there is a common ground upon which such a union could be achieved, and that is the crying need of peace, a need that cannot but be felt by anyone who has truly at heart, not the "saving" of his own or this or that party's political "face," but the saving of what still can be saved from the wreck of the country's former greatness and prosperity. If such a union could have been brought about, it would have presented to the world the imposing sight of a great nation rising in ardent and unanimous fervour for the sacred cause of Liberty and of Peace;

it would have increased tenfold the weight of Russia's voice in the Council of Nations; and it would have silenced those scornful voices, full of contempt for the Russian people, which—be it confessed to our shame—have sometimes found a not unwilling echo in our Press and in our society, so disastrously torn by partisan dissensions and passionate hatreds.

But it was not to be. The unique opportunity for opening negotiations with our Allies was neglected at a time when the imposing edifice of the State, although beginning already to be undermined by the rising tide of anarchy, was still standing erect and our strategic front was still unimpaired, and at a time when exhausted and defeated Germany was plainly anxious for peace. I have used the term "defeated Germany" purposely and advisedly. If one stops to consider that of the contending sides, the German side is the only one which holds in its armed possession immense extents of enemy territory on the European Continent which might become objects of annexation, as well as grounds for claiming pecuniary contributions in exchange for their surrender, one must suppose that nothing short of a realizing sense of Germany's defeat, irrespective of the actual military situation, could have induced the German Reichstag in its resolution of July 19th to declare itself in favour of a peace "without annexations and contributions"—if not in these very terms of the Russian democracy's formula, but unquestionably within its meaning—nor could have caused the German Government in its reply to the note of the Vatican to announce its willingness to conform not only to the wishes of His Holiness but likewise to the peace resolution of the Reichstag of July 19th.

It is evident that the German Government is not in a position to decline to accept any fair and reasonable terms that might be offered them, and it is obviously our duty to begin without the least delay negotiations with our Allies with a view to reaching an agreement as to such an expression of the determination of mankind, undoubtedly shared in by all the peoples, to put an end to the World War, as would lead to the initiation of negotiations for the conclusion of a general peace.

That my estimate of the situation in Germany was correct I find confirmed in what the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Czernin, has to say on the subject in his secret memorandum, presented to his Sovereign in the beginning of April 1917, as published now in the Count's book, *In the World War*. These are his words: "I am firmly convinced that Germany, too, like ourselves, has reached the limit of her strength, and the responsible political leaders in Berlin do not seek to deny it."

On the other hand, G. Lowes Dickinson, in his introduction to the recently published volume *Documents and Statements*

relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims, says on the subject of the Reichstag's peace resolution :

This resolution, it will be observed, is on the lines of the Russian proposals—a peace without annexations and without indemnities. But we have Count Czernin's authority for the statement that the military rulers in Germany were opposed to any such peace. There was thus a cleavage in Germany between the civilian Government and the majority of the representatives of the people on the one hand and the Army chiefs, who had the effective power, on the other. Had the Allied Governments been willing to consider such a peace as the Russian Democracy and the Reichstag were demanding, their policy was clear. They would have expressed their willingness to discuss terms on that basis. Had they done so, it is at least possible that the movement for peace in the enemy countries would have become irresistible and have swept the militarists from power. But as we have seen, the Allied Governments were just as much opposed to such a peace as the German militarists. The Reichstag resolution, therefore, was treated with contempt by the Governments, the Parliaments, and the Press of the Allied nations.

The Russian " bourgeois " Press was dealing with the question on the same lines, reflecting evidently the views of the Kerensky Government, which by that time had entirely fallen under the influence of the policy of continuing the war at any cost. Intending to have my say on the subject, and having found all the organs of the " bourgeois " Press inaccessible to me, nothing remained for me but to try my luck with the Socialist paper *Novaya Zhizn*, to whose editor, Maxim Gorki, I addressed the following letter :

Being a most convinced opponent of the Utopian doctrines of Socialism, and the more so of any attempts at their application to our country, I, nevertheless, venture to appeal to your patriotism and impartiality in requesting you to open the columns of your esteemed paper to this letter. I venture to do so because I know that you, as well as I, have set yourself the task of working for the re-establishment of general peace. To serve this cause I consider to be the sacred duty of every Russian citizen who has at heart the fate of his country and the saving of what can still be saved from the wreck of her former greatness and prosperity.

In order to prevent any intentional or unintentional misunderstanding of my position, I deem it necessary to state here expressly that in using the term " general peace " I do mean a peace reached in complete agreement with our Allies, with whom we should have begun negotiations more than six months ago, as directed by the

Democracy who had just overthrown the regime of autocracy, but whose directions have not been obeyed to this hour.

I beg you will find room for the following text of an identical letter I have addressed to the editors of the most widely read papers none of whom, however, has seen his way to print it :

“ In the treatment of the question of peace by our Press, which evidently reflects the views current among the public, the following points call for attention :

“ First, the adverse comment on the Russian Democracy’s proclaimed formula, Peace without annexations and without contributions, of which such a respected organ of the neutral Press as the *Journal de Genève*, in a leading article on June 26th, says : ‘ It imposes itself not only on the delegates at Stockholm, but on the opinion of all countries.’ At its sitting on July 19th the German Reichstag adhered to the sense of this formula. And in its reply to the note of the Vatican the German Government says how much it has at heart this task in conformity with the desires of His Holiness and with the resolution in regard to peace adopted by the German Reichstag on July 19th. This resolution, among other things, covers also the Reichstag’s adherence to the sense of the formula of Russia’s Democracy. The renunciation of annexations, implied in the adherence to this formula, can evidently refer only to that side which has realized the occupation by force of arms of territories which could become the objects of annexation. The Russian Democracy’s formula covers indisputably all territories occupied by the enemy, consequently also Courland with Riga, Lithuania and Poland, and does not, therefore, sacrifice any one of our real interests. The dreams of annexations by us of parts of Thrace, with Constantinople and the Asiatic shores of the Straits—if realizable at all—could evidently be realized only in a very remote and very dim future, and could not, therefore, be included in the category of real and actual interests of Russia. On the other hand, the acceptance by all the civilized Powers of the world of the Russian Democracy’s formula—which should be the aim of the future Peace Conference—would do away, once for all, with the right of conquest hitherto recognized by international law and would thereby remove for ever one of the most potent motives for armed contests between States.

“ Secondly, the constantly expressed expectation that the German Government would at last come out with a statement of the concrete conditions of peace which would be acceptable to them if they really, and not hypocritically, wished for peace, and also apprehensions lest their silence on this subject covered a trap with a view to induce our coalition to consent to the conclusion of a so-called German peace.

“ Similar statements fill the columns of those organs of the Press in Allied countries which minister to the public sentiment artificially created by the Governments and ruling classes, and sustained by a regime of censure and administrative tyranny hitherto unheard of in free countries. To anyone who has ever taken part in the conduct

of negotiations, not even on questions of great international importance, but simply on important questions of private interests, it must be perfectly plain that such attitude of the German Government is dictated to it precisely by their consciousness of the impossibility of realizing what is termed a German peace. In all business transactions the obvious tactics for the side which expects to have to make large concessions will consist, not in beginning by offering such concessions itself, but in waiting till they are demanded by the other side.

"But our coalition with the accession of the United States has acquired material strength and moral authority quite sufficient, in spite of the failure of our front, in order to cause—if and whenever it really so wills—the submission of the German Government and the ruling caste on whose support it relies, to the will of now almost all civilized mankind, if expressed in the terms of a final proposal based on the principles of justice and equity to all. The reluctance to enter upon negotiations to that effect can only be explained by the desire to continue the war at any cost in the hope that military events in an indefinite future will realize the total crushing of the adversary promised to their peoples by the belligerent Governments."

The above are views an open expression of which seems to be considered inconvenient and even dangerous by an influential part of our Press, although these views are undoubtedly shared in everywhere by millions of people who, even under the tyranny of the bellicose psychosis fostered by the Governments and the ruling classes, still possess the faculty of independent reasoning.

Our failure to enter upon negotiations with our Allies in the direction pointed out by the Democracy and the dubious attitude of our diplomacy in regard to its formula has already caused and continues to cause, an incalculable and irreparable injury to the true interests of Russia. The weight of her voice goes on diminishing with every month the war lasts, as the impending bankruptcy of the Treasury, the entire ruin of the economic life of the country, and the destruction of the social and political fabric of the State through the ever higher rising tide of anarchy, approaches nearer and nearer. At the same time this double-faced attitude toward the question of peace or war discloses before the world the division of the nation into an overwhelming majority thirsting for peace and an influential minority obstinately wedded to the doctrine of "war at any cost," which, if under existing conditions it could possibly be put in operation, could only lead to the completion of the ruin and perdition of Russia—a division which has already foreshadowed to us the formidable phantom of coming civil war.

We should remember that on contemporary Russia and her leading men of all parties a merciless verdict will be rendered by future generations of the Russian people.

The publication of this letter in Maxim Gorki's widely read newspaper brought down on my devoted head the fully expected silly insinuations of pro-Bolshevism and pro-

Germanism, which I could only treat with the contempt they deserved.

Of the comparative soundness of the divergent views taken of the situation in Russia by the Kerensky Government on the one hand, and by the author of these reminiscences on the other, the reader will be able to judge from the following quotations.

The first is from a telegraphic circular addressed by Mr. Terestchenko, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the Russian Ambassadors at Paris, London, Tokio and Washington, and to the envoy at Stockholm, under date August 31, 1917 (old style), relating to the military rising attempted by General Korniloff, with the connivance of the Duma leaders and other adherents of the "war at any cost" policy, which seems to have been favourably looked upon by Allied Diplomacy as promising an effective restoration of the Russian front. The Minister of Foreign Affairs begins by saying :

The rising of General Korniloff has been definitively liquidated ; all has been settled without bloodshed, as the troops moved by him on Petrograd refused to march against the Provisional Government and declared their submission.

In concluding his circular he says :

In general it may be considered that the regrettable events of the last days, thanks to their quick liquidation, have not weakened us for the struggle with the external enemy, but have demonstrated the unity of sentiment and the general tendency toward concentration on that struggle regardless of domestic dissensions. Whatever attempts may be made in the future, from left or right, to disturb the course of policy adopted by the Government, it may be hoped that they will meet with a unanimous rebuff in the country. The Government will firmly follow the path of continuation of the war at any cost and will with renewed energy conduct the work of the renovation and restoration of the moral health of the Army.

The second is the text of a letter I had occasion to address four days later, in reply to an inquiry, to a distinguished English statesman with whom I was in friendly correspondence :

PETROGRAD, *September 3/16, 1917.*

MY DEAR —,

I do not know whether my reply to your last letter which I had to forward by mail ever reached you. Under present conditions it is rather difficult to carry on a regular correspondence.

The present missive, however, will reach you through another channel. It would take me a couple of hours to tell you all I would have to say, or a ream of notepaper to take it down in writing. The best I can do, therefore, is to enclose herewith some of the material I have had printed for circulation among my friends, from which you will be able to form an opinion in regard to my views on the situation of affairs. The sober, unvarnished truth being nowadays everywhere in belligerent countries treated as contraband of war and a most dangerous explosive, I have great difficulty in bringing my views before the public even here, where there is now no more political censure. So it happened that even the mildly socialistic *Den*, which had picked up sufficient civic courage to print my first article on the way out of the present impasse, felt itself compelled to refuse to publish a second one, part of the substance of which you will find reproduced in "A Letter from a Russian Patriot to an American Friend," of which I enclose a printed copy.

The greatest perturbing element in the situation has been the totally erroneous conception of the true meaning of the Russian Revolution formed at first in Allied countries on the basis apparently of the dubious attitude of our diplomacy, due either to failure to understand the real trend of events or else to culpable insincerity. Even now people who ought to know better are loath to admit that the mainspring of the outbreak of the Revolution was the revolt of the people against the war—a revolt that will probably soon be shared in by the "masses" in other belligerent countries, unless the "classes" come to their senses before it will be too late.

The attempted revolt of General Korniloff has disclosed a crisis of the utmost gravity. Its immediate inglorious collapse, it is to be hoped, should at least have served to open the eyes of even the most obstinately purblind believers in the "war to the end" doctrine, and to convince them of the utter hopelessness of their endeavour to force their policy upon an unwilling people. The country is confronted now by this alternative:

Either the speedy conclusion of a general peace (not, of course, a separate peace with Germany, that groundless bugbear of Allied Diplomacy and of our own Chauvinists), but a general peace on the basis of the Russian Democracy's programme, and of the principles proclaimed by President Wilson!

Or else, the prospect of civil war, anarchy, and the disruption of Russia as a State, which could not possibly be to the advantage of any one of our Allies.

Yours very sincerely,
R. R.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Korniloff's rising and its failure—Russian political parties—The Soviet and the Provisional Government—The Duma—Kerensky and his party—Communications from Allied Ambassadors—The two Socialist parties—Allies' attitude to Russia—Further efforts towards peace.

IN the preceding chapter the military rising attempted by General Korniloff in August 1917 has been briefly alluded to in two absolutely contradictory interpretations of the meaning of the collapse of this attempt, as expressed on the one hand in a circular telegram of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Terestchenko, to Russian representatives abroad, dated August 31st (old style), and on the other hand in a letter addressed four days later by the author of these reminiscences to an English statesman with whom he was in friendly correspondence.

Mr. E. H. Wilcox, in *Russia's Ruin*, rightly considers this affair to have been the turning-point of the Russian Revolution. When he says, "After that episode the triumph of Bolshevism and the dissolution of Russia into primeval chaos were inevitable," he hits the nail on the head indeed, although in the very circumstantial account he gives of the "Korniloff affair," and of the network of political intrigues, counter-intrigues, misunderstandings and treachery in which that gallant, honest and single-minded soldier, quite inexperienced—to his honour be it said—in such intrigues, found himself helplessly enmeshed, Mr. Wilcox does not make quite clear the real reason why General Korniloff's undertaking was inevitably doomed to failure.

The discovery of that reason could not, of course, but be most unwelcome to our Allies and may, therefore, have been purposely delayed until it would no longer be possible to ignore it. It is, however, hardly credible that Kerensky and his associates could have failed to understand the true cause, or rather the true meaning, of the collapse of General

Korniloff's undertaking, and that they could have been acting in good faith when asserting, as Mr. Terestchenko did in his circular, evidently intended to be communicated to the Allied Powers, that "the events of the last days had not weakened them for the struggle with the external enemy, but had demonstrated the unity of sentiment and the general tendency towards concentration on that struggle regardless of domestic dissensions," and furthermore that they would "firmly follow the path of continuation of the war at any cost," and would "with renewed energy conduct the work of the renovation and restoration of the moral health of the Army."

One assertion in Mr. Terestchenko's circular, quoted in the preceding chapter, namely, that "the troops moved by Korniloff on Petrograd refused to march," was unquestionably true. But it was not true that they "refused to march"—as that circular asserts—"against the Government." Mr. Wilcox rightly says: "Korniloff's action was not a *coup d'état* in the ordinary sense of the term, either in form or substance. He wanted to strengthen the Government, not to weaken it. He did not want to encroach upon its authority, but to prevent others from doing so. He wanted to emancipate it from the illicit and paralysing influence of the Soviets." That was the very reason why his troops refused to march, and they refused to march, not against the Government, but against the "Soviets," whose influence in favour of peace Korniloff and his aiders and abettors, the Duma leaders, with the undoubted moral support of Entente Diplomacy, wanted to paralyse for the purpose of continuing the war with renewed energy—a purpose utterly abhorrent to the overwhelming majority of the people and against which the mutinous soldiery were in almost open revolt.

In passing judgment on the policies pursued both by the first Provisional Government under Prince Lwoff and Miliukoff, and then by the Coalition Government under Kerensky—policies which in the end delivered unfortunate Russia into the hands of the only party clear-sighted enough to have gauged aright the real feelings and ardent craving for peace of the immense bulk of the nation, and to have secured, by ministering to them, the unflinching support of the soldiery, the sailors and the revolutionary workmen—it is

but just to take into account the circumstances and conditions which may be said to mitigate their unquestionable guilt in this respect. Their responsibility, however, cannot be shifted to other shoulders ; for no amount of enemy gold at their disposal could have enabled the fanatic visionaries of Bolshevism, with their following of murderous bandits, to accomplish what the failure of the Government to satisfy the legitimate craving of the people and the tragically crying need of the country rendered so easy for them to achieve.

Incidentally I would remark that the constant and still continued harping on the traitorous venality of the leaders of Bolshevism and their treasonable propaganda work as the cause of Russia's downfall and ruin, apart from the absence of all sense of national dignity which it discloses, cannot exonerate from reproach those whose policies had brought Russia to the brink of the precipice, nor those who, by their incompetence, irresolution and lack of moral courage, have rendered possible the seizure of power by a band of dangerous dreamers, determined to promote by the ruthless destruction of the social fabric of their own country the advent of the socialistic world revolution by which they expect to secure the future felicity of mankind.

It might be said—perhaps not without reason—that it would be best to cover with the mantle of charity the failings and shortcomings, as well as the sins of commission and omission, of the chief actors in Russia's tragedy ; since, after all, they might be held to have been merely unconscious pawns in the hands of Fate. But, considering the momentous and sinister meaning for the rest of the world of the awful tragedy which is being enacted in a country covering a seventh part of the inhabited globe, among a people justly entitled to the claim of being one of the most important members of the family of nations of the white race, the author of these reminiscences has set himself the task of shedding as much light as he may be able to on the conditions, the motives and the influences which determined—it may be unavoidably—the attitude and policies of the party leaders and their following, in whose actions (or else in whose inaction at critical moments) this tragedy had its origin.

In attempting to accomplish this task to the best of my ability I must begin by earnestly requesting my readers

to divest themselves of all traditional preconceived notions in regard to political parties and party politics, in a Western sense, which can have no application to Russian conditions. I will even say that the inveterate habit of viewing Russian affairs exclusively from the standpoint of Western political conditions has led public opinion in foreign countries into grievous misconceptions, causing valuable sympathy and well-meant moral support to be wasted on causes which, however, worthy they may have appeared to Western eyes, were in reality either consciously or unconsciously working for the downfall and ruin of Russia, and, on the other hand, causing the undeserved odium of reactionary so-called "Tsarism" to be thrown on those who in the maintenance of the Empire saw the only salvation of their country and the guarantee of its greatness and prosperity.

First of all it should be kept in view that in Russia political parties do not penetrate the density and do not reach the depth of the popular masses. They are practically confined to the thin layer of the "Intelligentsia," spread over the immense surface of the inarticulate and largely illiterate bulk of the nation, from which they are, as I have already many times had occasion to point out, separated by an almost unbridgeable gulf of mutual non-comprehension. They played the game of party politics among themselves. The bulk of the nation, the mainstay of its power and prosperity, the peasantry, were only being drawn into the game for the purpose of securing their support by holding out to their baser instincts the bait of a prospective spoliation in their favour of their neighbours, the landowning gentry. All the parties, from the Cadets, the Constitutional Democrats down, were dealing in such promises, endeavouring to outbid one another in the generosity of their potential disposal of other people's rights of property. But none of these parties could in justice lay claim to be truly representative of the people. They were, one and all, flesh from the flesh and bone from the bone of the "Intelligentsia." "Mere doctrinaires," as Dr. E. J. Dillon has it in his *Eclipse of Russia*, "and moving far apart from the popular currents, they operated with borrowed theories. . . . They were Westernized politicians, foreign political ideal-mongers, who had no vested interests in the country and dealt mainly in abstractions, imported conceptions and exotic

theories. This master fact of the situation appears to have been wholly missed by Entente diplomacy. For Great Britain and France took the Liberals, who subsequently became the Cadets, as their advisers, and made support of the Cadets the cornerstone of their Russian policy. Miliukoff, Gutchkoff, Rodzianko, and their friends were the oracles whose utterances were eagerly sought after and whose counsels were generally followed—with the deplorable results recorded in recent history. They were upright, honourable, enlightened men, who lacked political experience and acquaintanceship with the temper of their own people."

One fact alone throws a lurid light on the condition of pitiable helplessness in which the Revolution surprised them. That fact was the invasion, on the very first day of the Revolution, of the Duma's own palace by a band of Socialists, who proclaimed themselves a "Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates," who could not lay claim to represent anything or anybody save revolutionary factory hands and mutinous soldiers of the Petrograd garrison, before whom, nevertheless, the legally elected representatives of the nation gave way at once, and with whom the Duma leaders felt themselves compelled to negotiate for the very formation of the Provisional Government, which was never more than a Government in name and on sufferance, having, moreover, had to accept as a fellow-member, Kerensky, the vice-president of the "Soviet." All this would seem incredible if it had not been true. There is, however, a rational explanation of what, at first, must have appeared inexplicable to any observer only superficially acquainted with Russian mentality and Russian conditions. But this explanation, being an unwelcome one, was for a long time being discarded, until events confirming it rendered it impossible to deny its truth any longer. It was this:

That the Provisional Government was powerless from the very first day of its installation, and must, in its inner consciousness, have been aware of the true reason of its powerlessness, because it represented a fiction—whether deliberately created with intent to deceive or produced by naïve illusions and pious, supposedly patriotic, self-deception I shall not undertake to determine—the fiction of the supposed revolt of the people against the inefficiency of the overthrown

Imperial Government's conduct of the war, or the fiction of the people's ardent desire for its continuation with redoubled energy, whereas the Socialist Soviet represented a reality: the desperate craving for peace of the immense bulk of the nation. The fiction was for some time persistently maintained by Russian and Allied war propaganda and the reality was as persistently denied or attributed to the influence of German gold—an insinuation which every Russian gifted with a modicum of self-respect should resent as an offensive reflection upon the Russian people. But the proportion of real power possessed by each of the sides was necessarily commensurate with the importance of the popular backing it could rely on. On the Duma side it was limited to the adherents of the "war at any cost" policy among the "Bourgeoisie," or "Intelligentzia," and, therefore, amounted practically to nothing, since the "Intelligentzia" had no material force at its command. Hence the helplessness of the Provisional Government in its contest with the "Soviet." It was reduced to the necessity of resorting to systematic, diplomatic "sabotage" of the Soviet's peace policy, rendered easy and effective owing to the Soviet leaders' glaring ignorance, evident inexperience and consequently incompetence in the conduct of international affairs. But the Provisional Government and its only support, the Bourgeois Intelligentzia, placed themselves thereby in antagonism to the unmistakable will to peace of the overwhelming majority of the people. By the fatal unwisdom of the position taken by what might be termed the "classes" as differentiated from the "masses" in the vital, all-overshadowing question of peace or war—in calling it unwisdom I am using the mildest term I can think of, for, presuming to speak as a Russian, to whom Russia comes first and who is unable to view with equanimity the deliberate sacrifice of his country to the satisfaction of the hatreds, ambitions and rivalries of other nations, I would have been justified in applying a harsher term—the "classes" have incurred the fierce hatred of the "masses," in whose eyes they were primarily guilty of having brought down upon the people the unspeakable and unending misery of the war and its indefinite prolongation.

They have paid for their unwisdom, partly with bodily

extermination, partly with all the bitterness of exile and utter destitution in foreign lands, and partly—cruellest of all—with degrading slavery to Bolshevik masters !

But the greatest and almost irretrievable misfortune that could have befallen unhappy Russia has been the elimination of the educated classes, who should have been the natural leaders of the nation, without whose leadership and active co-operation the rescue of Russia from her present condition of primitive communistic barbarism and her reconstitution as a civilized State will be a gigantic task, which, perhaps, the gradual evolution of coming generations alone will be able to accomplish.

Among the educated classes the most influential and best organized political party was the Constitutional-Democratic or, by abbreviation, Cadet Party, having of late adopted the style and title of "Party of the People's Freedom." This party, which formerly had been opposed to the war with Japan and to Russia's imperialistic activity in the Far East, had become a strong supporter of Iswolsky's and Sazonoff's policy that had involved Russia in the World War, and enjoying the favour of the diplomacy of the Entente, was wedded to the doctrine of "war at any cost," or "war to the bitter end" and "no peace without victory." I felt that the moment was approaching when the persistent pursuit of such a policy, which, under pressure by the Allies, had already led to the disastrous spectacular advance of our troops in Galicia ending in the horror and disgrace of Tarnopol, whose successful pursuit, as far as Russia was concerned, was, under existing conditions, manifestly impossible and which was, moreover, utterly abhorrent, not only to a demoralized soldiery, but to a profoundly war-weary people, would unavoidably, unless arrested in time, lead to the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks who were prepared to promise the people immediate peace.

Having failed in my persistent endeavours to approach the leading members of the Government, it occurred to me that I might meet with better luck at the hands of the leaders of the Cadet Party whose influence in the Coalition Government seemed to be still active in diplomatic matters. My earnest request to be given a hearing at a forthcoming meeting of the Central Committee of the Party elicited from one of

its members a letter of regret, dated October 12 (old style), 1917, in which he wrote :

"However valuable might have been to the Central Committee of the Party of the People's Freedom an opportunity to hear you, circumstances have arisen owing to which the appearance before a meeting of the Committee of a person of such weight and authority as yourself, and in support of the views which you have recently expressed on the pages of the *Novaya Zhizn*, would produce abroad [meaning apparently in diplomatic circles of the Entente] a quite definite impression and would be interpreted in a sense undesirable to the Party." The views here referred to had been expressed by me in the open letter which I wrote to Maxim Gorki, editor of the *Novaya Zhizn*. These views, although favourably commented on by one or two English newspapers of acknowledged standing, may have been unpalatable to the diplomacy of the Entente. The proposition, however, that a Russian statesman who has grown grey in the service of his country and who can, after all, lay claim to some experience in affairs of State, could not appear and be heard before the Central Committee of a Russian Parliamentary Party without creating "abroad" an impression undesirable to that party—is a proposition characteristic of a mentality whose apparent prevalence among our politicians goes far towards explaining the kind of estimation in which Russian statesmanship and Russian political parties seem to be held in more advanced countries.

I have mentioned this unimportant personal incident merely because I think that it throws an illuminating side-light on the whole abnormal situation, inasmuch as it illustrates the extent to which the foremost and most influential of our Bourgeois parties was feeling itself dependent on the goodwill of Foreign, albeit Allied diplomacy.

The situation was really this: the March Revolution, in the eyes of unprejudiced observers, whom war psychosis had not deprived of the faculty of seeing things as they are, and not merely as they would have wished them to be, had plainly disclosed, not by any means the "union of the whole nation in the ardent desire to continue the war with redoubled energy," but, on the contrary, the division of the nation in two very unequal parts: on one side the immense but

inarticulate bulk of the people ardently craving for peace, and on the other side a small but influential minority wedded to the policy of continuation of the war at any cost.

Such was undoubtedly the relative importance of the forces arrayed on either side in the country. In the Duma, however, the relative position of the sides was reversed, or rather the peace sentiment of the overwhelming majority of the people was not represented at all, if one leaves out of account the few Socialist-Revolutionary members, disguised as "labourites," including Kerensky himself, whose voices, if they could have been raised, would have been drowned in the general chorus of war enthusiasm, such as used to greet on every solemn occasion the appearance in the diplomatic box of the Ambassadors of the Entente Powers. Whether any of these diplomats entertained doubts as to the genuineness of this enthusiasm manifested by men who could not but be aware of the desperately critical position of their country, which, as the far-seeing among them must have realized, was heading for a downright catastrophe in case of an indefinite prolongation of the war, I cannot say. But it would seem rather natural that they should have been deceived by appearances and should have overestimated the influence and power of the Bourgeois parties, underrating the compelling force of the peace sentiment of the bulk of the nation. The immediate self-effacement of the Duma before the hurriedly constituted, entirely self-appointed "Soviet," explicable only by the Duma members' unavowed consciousness of not representing the real feelings of the people, might have opened their eyes to the reality of the situation. If it did not have that effect on them at once, it can only have been because they had suffered themselves to be deceived by the disingenuous assurances of their protégés, who had been allowed by the Soviet to form a simulacrum of a Provisional Government.

These assurances, however, were in direct opposition to the aim proclaimed at first by the Socialists, namely, the earliest possible conclusion of a general peace (emphatically not a separate peace with Germany) on the basis of the following principles: No annexations, no contributions, and self-determination of nationalities—principles which were persistently antagonized and even openly ridiculed and

sneered at in the "bourgeois" Press and were at the same time quietly ignored in the official utterances of the Foreign Department of the Provisional Government. Thus was laid bare from the very beginning the existence of a fundamental conflict of aims and policies between the officially constituted, universally recognized, but shadowy Provisional Government and the real power behind the Throne. The issue of this conflict could not be doubtful. It could only end in the elimination of the weaker side, which in this case was the Lwoff-Miliukoff Government, just as a few months later its successor, the Kerensky Government, under similar circumstances and for the same reason, was defeated and supplanted by the Bolshevist Government of the Soviets.

It becomes necessary now to examine the part played in these events by Kerensky and the party of which he was the leader. I have no doubt that at the time when he became head of the Government he was sincerely determined to do his best to bring about a general peace. At any rate, in the course of the only interview I ever had with him, on the very evening, in the beginning of May, when he had just succeeded in forming his first Coalition Government, he told me that he had decided to break definitely with Sazonoff's and Miliukoff's policy, which could evidently mean only one thing, namely, that he was prepared to enter into negotiations with our Allies with a view to the eventual conclusion of a general peace on the basis of the principles proclaimed by the Socialists, as the question of the conclusion of a separate peace with Germany had never even been considered in any shape or form. That he very soon departed from his original standpoint—unless I had misunderstood his meaning—became evident to me when, a few days later, he transferred Mr. Terestchenko from the post of Minister of Finance, which he had for some weeks held, to that of Minister of Foreign Affairs, for the occupancy of which he was as little qualified by experience as could have been desired by those who would have to treat with him questions of the utmost importance to the country. This young, clever, well-bred and fashionable cavalier, who had apparently taken up revolutionary politics as a kind of multi-millionaire's sport, seems to have fallen at once under the influence of his predecessors in office and the experienced staff of his department, who naturally were

zealous adepts of the policy which unfortunate Russia was expiating so cruelly. He may, besides, not have been insensible to the attractions of social intercourse with high and mighty Ambassadors, nor refractory to their blandishments, like his chief, the President du Conseil, Ministre de la Guerre et de la Marine, dwelling in the splendid halls of the Winter Palace, and travelling in regal state in Imperial trains and automobiles. Theirs were the ludicrously, or rather tragically, incompetent hands into which a mocking fate had placed the destinies of a once proud Empire and of a great and generous nation.

It was becoming evident that in these conditions an initiation by the Provisional Government of negotiations with our Allies aiming at the conclusion of a general peace could hardly be thought of.

A golden opportunity was going to be missed for ever, a chance for bringing about the only condition that could have rendered possible the realization of the aim for the attainment of which so many noble minds are vainly striving now—a real League of Nations which could only have been based on the termination of the World War by a peace of conciliation. I do not know who was the author of the famous formula: No annexations, no contributions, and self-determination of nationalities. It seems to have been a spontaneous expression of an idea responding to the intimate sentiment of mankind, and to its craving for a real peace and recovery from the psychosis of strife and hatred and revenge which threatens to overwhelm the civilization of the modern world. It was launched forth to the world by an entirely self-constituted body, but it was the voice of the soul of the Russian people. It was felt to be such, and that was the reason why the Russian Revolution was at first hailed so universally as the dawn of a brighter day, just as was the proclamation by President Wilson of the principles responding to the noble ideals of the American people which later caused his arrival in Europe to be hailed with enthusiastic, almost religious, fervour by the masses—not the “classes”—of all European peoples as the advent of a Messiah of Peace.

Instead of availing itself of the universal and enthusiastic sympathy which the Russian Revolution evoked at first in the masses of the people all over the world, who undoubtedly

would have hailed with unbounded delight new-born Russia's coming forward frankly as an apostle of pacification and initiator of negotiations for a general peace, the first revolutionary Provisional Government, under the leadership of Miliukoff and the Cadet Party deliberately chose to cast in its lot with the "classes," which in all belligerent countries, on both sides, were bent on the continuation of the war of mutual extermination to the sole advantage of their common enemy, Revolutionary Socialism, whether in the guise of Bolshevism, or Communism, or Syndicalism, the most dangerous, relentless enemy of civilization.

The moderate Social Revolutionaries under Kerensky's leadership might have saved the country had they remained faithful to their own ideal of general peace on the basis of the three points and had they at once initiated negotiations with the Allies with that end in view. That may, indeed, at first have been—and probably was, if I am not mistaken—their intention. But they were necessarily handicapped by their ignorance and total lack of experience in the handling of international affairs. Moreover, Kerensky's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Terestchenko, seems to have been taking advantage of his chief's ignorance of international relations in order to manage them more or less on the same lines as his predecessors in office, with whose policies Kerensky was supposed to have made up his mind to break for good. And then they had both evidently been taken in hand by the diplomacy of the Entente, and been made pliable tools of the latter's policy, as witness the advance of our troops in Galicia in June 1917, recklessly undertaken evidently under pressure of the Allies, which led to such fatal consequences in disclosing to the enemy the utter demoralization and collapse of our Army.

The zealous subserviency displayed by the Provisional Government in obvious disregard of Russia's most vital interests did not, however, protect it from the treatment at the hands of Allied diplomacy which its humble submissiveness evidently invited. We may judge of it now from the secret documents from the archives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs which have been published by the Soviet Government. The following secret telegrams refer to a painful incident illustrating the nature of the relations

established between the Provisional Government and the Allied Ambassadors accredited to it :

[*Secret telegram to the Ambassador of Russia at Washington.*]

PETROGRAD, September 26 (October 9), 1917.

No. 4559.

The English, French and Italian Ambassadors were received to-day by the Minister President, and in the name of the Governments made a communication to him on the necessity of re-establishing the fighting capacity of our Army. This *démarche* could not but produce a painful impression on the Provisional Government, the more so as all our Allies are cognizant of the efforts which the Government is making for the continuation of the unremitting fight against the common enemy. I beg you will transmit in strict confidence to Mr. Lansing how highly the Provisional Government appreciate the abstention of the American Ambassador from participation in the above-mentioned collective *démarche*.

(Signed) TERESTCHENKO.

In another secret telegram addressed on the same day to the Russian representatives in London, Paris and Rome, Mr. Terestchenko informs them that the three Ambassadors in their collective communication pointed out " that recent events inspire doubts as to the force of resistance of Russia, and as to the possibility for her to continue the war, in consequence whereof public opinion in Allied countries may demand of their Governments an account of the material assistance extended to Russia. In order to render it possible for the Allied Governments to quiet public opinion and to inspire it again with confidence, the Russian Government must prove in reality its determination to employ all possible means to re-establish discipline and military spirit in the Army, and likewise to assure the regular functioning of the Government apparatus at the front as well as in the rear. In concluding, the Allied Governments express the hope that the Russian Government will fulfil their task and thereby secure the assistance of the Allies."

Such was the tone adopted by the Allies in their dealings with the Provisional Government. And now follows a third telegram illustrating the spirit in which the Provisional Government responded to the comminatory communication of the Allied Governments :

[*Secret telegram to the Russian Representatives in London, Paris and Rome.*]

PETROGRAD, September 28 (October 11), 1917.

The collective communication of the three Ambassadors has produced on us a painful impression by its essence as well as by the form in which it was presented. Our Allies are well acquainted with the exceptional efforts put forth by the Provisional Government with a view to re-establish the fighting capacity of the Army. Neither military defeats, nor interior troubles, nor enormous material difficulties within the last six months, have been able to break the firm resolve of the Russian Government to continue to the end the fight with the common enemy. In these conditions we are decidedly at a loss to understand what motives could have caused the above-mentioned *démarche* of our Allies and what actual results they expect of it. Be pleased to communicate this telegram to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Transmit to him also my insistent request not to publish the *démarche* of the Allies without previous agreement with us, so as to avoid a dangerous excitement of our public opinion.

(Signed) TERESTCHENKO.

No Russian patriot could peruse without the deepest blush of shame these documents, which throw such a lurid light on the depth of abasement to which a great country had been reduced by the Revolution and the usurpation of power by the grotesque personages who presumed to speak in its name.

That the Allies should have treated the Kerensky Government with scant consideration is not surprising. The bourgeois parties having failed them, through their lamentable incapacity to maintain themselves in power, they were compelled to take up the game with the Socialists, who had succeeded in ousting their bourgeois predecessors. But it was natural that they should have done so reluctantly. Neither of the two branches of the Socialist Party could, indeed, lay claim to be considered as a party fit to govern the country. The Social Revolutionaries had been carrying on for years an active revolutionary propaganda among the peasantry, with promises of the spoliation of the landowning gentry, and had been warring with the Imperial Government by means of innumerable terroristic crimes; the Social Democrats were bent on transplanting Marxian Socialism and class warfare on Russian soil, but had been opposed to terrorism on principle as an ineffective weapon of political struggle; that is to say, the terrorism which expressed itself

in individual assassinations and not in the wholesale butchery which has been the most infamous feature of the Lenin-Trotsky regime.

To non-Socialists (writes E. H. Wilcox in his *Russia's Ruin*) there was, in the old days, very little to choose between Social Revolutionaries and Social Democrats. If any preference was felt, it was probably given to the Social Democrats, whose record was not yet stained with terrorism, and who, consequently, might be regarded as harmless doctrinaires so long as the realization of their theories lay outside the sphere of practical politics. However, the war, which upset so many old-established conceptions, wrought a great change here. By all their traditions the Social Revolutionaries were inclined to be national and patriotic. By their fundamental principles the Social Democrats were essentially international; that is to say, unpatriotic. The "harmless doctrinaires" thus became the most dangerous of men, the "dastardly" terrorists the main hope of the Allies. These cross-currents were not, however, uniform in their action, and two of the stoutest champions of the Allied cause were Plehanoff, the founder of the Russian Social Democratic Party, and Savinkoff, the author of a score of terrorist outrages.

This seems to be a fair statement of the view taken by the Allies of the respective positions of the two branches of the Russian Socialist Party, with one of which, after the collapse and passing of the bourgeois parties, they found themselves compelled in pursuing their policy to deal as with the power standing behind the shadowy Kerensky Government and supposedly willing to champion their cause. Whether this cause—I mean the cause of the continuation of the war at any cost—could, in existing conditions, be held to be the cause of Russia, and in how far any of these political parties could be held to represent the real will of the Russian people, was obviously a consideration of secondary importance in the eyes of the Allies so long as they could, by the exercise of pressure on the Provisional Government, be able to secure the maintenance of the Russian front in some, at least, state of relative efficiency, this being of paramount importance to them from purely strategic considerations which, to the exclusion of statesmanship, entirely dominated their policies. The necessities of war, revolution and politics are apt to lead to strange bed-fellowships, and it is natural that the Powers of the Entente should have resigned themselves—not, I take it, without some reluctance—to deal, as with statesmen,

with the leaders of a party whose erstwhile only claim to distinction had been that it had for years been carrying on, by seditious propaganda, conspiracies and terroristic crimes, a relentless warfare against the Imperial Government, the Government of their own country, and the former ally of these Powers.

It is abundantly clear from the contents of the joint communication made to the Provisional Government by the Allies that they were perfectly well aware of the hopeless condition of the Russian front. Their statesmen were far too experienced not to have realized that this condition could never be remedied by any representations, however comminatory, addressed to a Government as helplessly incompetent itself, and indeed as powerless, as was Kerensky's Provisional Government. They must also surely have been able to foresee the fate that was in store for Russia unless she were rescued in time by the negotiation of a general peace.

Why, then, was this obvious conclusion not drawn and acted upon instead of attempts being continued to push Russia farther down the road leading infallibly to her downfall and ruin? The game of high politics on the chessboard of Europe not being played on altruistic lines, the rescue, pure and simple, of Russia—her staying any longer in the war having become manifestly improbable, not to say impossible—could evidently never be either a motive or an aim of the policy of the Allies, unless such a rescue could serve their permanent interests aside from the strategic requirements of the moment.

In order to find a plausible answer to the above query it will be necessary to cast a cursory glance at the history of the relations which have existed between Russia and the rest of Europe all through the last two centuries. On these pages I can, of course, but briefly refer to the main feature characteristic of these relations. But to my American readers, who, I take it, are as a rule as little acquainted with the intricacies of European politics as Europeans are with American political affairs, I would recommend the perusal of the chapter headed "Fear of Russia" in Mr. Oliver M. Sayler's very interesting book, *Russia, White or Red*. Except where he seems to be leaning towards a sympathetic view

of the Utopian doctrines of Socialism and its offspring, Bolshevism—a mental attitude apparently expected of young writers of liberal tendencies—or where he sacrifices to the no less obligatory traditional ritual of haughty scorn of “Tsardom,” or “White Russia” as “a ghastly spectre of human slavery,” commonly observed by people whose only knowledge of Russia is derived from the propaganda literature spread abroad by Russian revolutionaries and their foreign sympathizers—the author presents a succinct, but sufficiently illuminating explanation of the historical causes which have determined from time to time, as circumstances would have seemed to require, the attitude toward Russia of Great Britain and France as well as Germany. He also points to the United States as the only great nation with a viewpoint sufficiently disinterested and detached to observe and acknowledge the facts of the situation in Russia fearlessly and honestly, and adds on page 255 of his book: “we have not blamed her and cursed her for her downfall.” This, I think, the Russian people will remember when the awakening from the present nightmare shall have come.

In the opening paragraph of the above-mentioned chapter of his book Mr. Saylor says:

Fear of Russia has been the consistent attitude of every country in Europe ever since she emerged as a World Power under Peter the Great and Catherine in the eighteenth century. Distrust of the motives of the great white autocracy of the North and anxiety as to what pose her changing and irresponsible will would assume in the face of important crises have put Great Britain and France, Prussia and later the German Empire, Austria and Turkey and Scandinavia, eternally on their guard. At one time they have sought her favour, and then again they have patched up alliances to offset a possible change of heart of the Bear.

These few sentences express truthfully the viewpoint from which, ever since her entry into the family of European nations, Russia has been regarded by the other Powers. Thanks to the overshadowing size of her territory and to the overwhelming numerical superiority of her population, Russia loomed too large on the field of world politics not to be either feared as a potential enemy or courted as a possible ally. At the same time, in spite of the many lovable qualities which attracted to the Russian people sincere sympathies

from those foreigners who were living in their midst or who were under the charm of their literature and their art, Russia as a State and on account of her political and cultural backwardness was at bottom an object of ill-concealed antipathy, not to use a harsher term, to open foe and pretended friend alike.

A realization, therefore, of the true character of the other Powers' relations to Russia should have guided the policies of her statesmen if she had possessed any worthy of that name. It was evidently Alexander III's intuitive comprehension of it that caused him to break loose from the alliance of the Three Emperors and to remain, until within two years of the close of his reign, unfettered by any international political obligations of any kind. Thanks to this wise policy, Russia under his reign had reached the zenith of her power and credit and had become the arbiter of the world's peace, since as long as she was not committed to the support of either side no one Power could have attempted the formidable risk of starting a general war in Europe. But by descending into the arena and joining one of the sides in the perennial struggle for military supremacy on the Continent of Europe, Russia rendered such a war not only possible, but unavoidable, unless the ruling powers in all the countries concerned were to undergo a fundamental change in their psychology, of which change not the faintest indication was then, nor is to this hour, perceptible to the eye of an unbiased observer.

It was but the logical outcome of this fatal departure from the Emperor Alexander III's original, wise and patriotic policy that Russia should have been involved in the catastrophe of the World War, for a participation in which she had no justifiable cause and was glaringly unprepared, and unfit materially as well as morally. Nor was it to be wondered at that, given the true character of the relations to her of friend and foe alike, the undoing and dismemberment of Russia should have become the object of the policy, first of her enemies, and after their failure to effect it, of her Allies, as soon as they perceived that her active and fruitfully utilizable participation in the war and in their plans for its ultimate settlement was no longer to be expected, or had, indeed, become impossible.

That this settlement, as regards Russia, should have taken the form of a vivisection practised by her Allies on the agonizing chief victim of the World War by carving out of her writhing body a number of independent republics to form a "barrier" to satisfy their hatreds, their vengeance and their fears, and, moreover, of a pound of flesh in the shape of Bessarabia made over for all time, without Russia's consent even having been reserved, to Roumania as a gratification or a bribe—all this might have been expected, and, however disastrous to our unfortunate country, could, in a world such as it is and always has been, hardly be said to furnish sufficient ground for just complaints on the part of so-called statesmen, party leaders, politicians, writers, with the deluded herd of their followers from the ranks of the "Intelligentsia," who, by their policies, have themselves all along been digging the grave of their country. But a day will come when a resurrected nation will with undying gratitude remember that the only voice that was raised in protest against the iniquity of such a settlement was the voice of the United States, the voice of the ever-generous American people.

There was, however, another possible point of view from which the Allies might have looked upon the situation created by the Russian Revolution—the point of view not only of statesmanship, but also of plain business interests. That Russia, once started on the down grade of revolutionary anarchy, could not be arrested and would go from bad to worse, until the very bottom of destruction and ruin was reached, must have been sufficiently evident to every unbiased observer. It must have been no less evident to any reflecting mind that the destruction of the political and social fabric of the Russian State would leave in the structure of the economic life of Europe—if ever it was to be resurrected after the general ruin wrought by the World War—an enormous void that nothing could fill, not to mention that the only possible security for the ultimate recovery of the billions of money loaned to Russia before and during the war would have been the maintenance of the Russian State as an unimpaired political entity.

It would seem, therefore, that the plainest considerations of enlightened selfishness should have dictated to the Allies the only possible policy that could have saved Russia from

the catastrophe whose ultimate consequences would be bound to affect most injuriously their own obvious interests.

But the question of an early peace, or war to the bitter end, had acquired, in connection with the underlying meaning of the Russian Revolution, a momentous importance, overshadowing all considerations of traditional statesmanship and national self-interest. This meaning of the Revolution, which war propaganda, by its shallow interpretation, was doing its best to obscure, carried nevertheless a solemn warning to the ruling classes in all belligerent countries, inasmuch as it meant the beginning of the awakening of the toiling masses which compose the overwhelming majority of the people of every country to a realization of the fact that the war and its indefinite prolongation had been and was being forced on them by their rulers in the pursuit of tempting phantoms of power, of hegemony, of prestige, of revenge—which meant nothing to them simply as men and women, but for the pursuit of which they were made to pay with the lives of millions of their sons and brothers, with millions of ruined homes and with all the untold misery and suffering wrought by a war on such a gigantic scale. It further meant that when the day of their final awakening should have dawned upon the masses they would make it a day of reckoning with their rulers and that the fratricidal war between the nations might resolve itself into a fratricidal and suicidal war between the “ masses ” and the “ classes ” within the nations.

To this warning, unmistakably conveyed in the meaning of the events which had taken place in Russia and were soon to lead to the tragic developments the world has since been witnessing in horror and dismay, the author of these reminiscences attempted to call attention in the open letter addressed, in July 1917, to an American friend then in Petrograd, in the hope of being able to secure its publication in the American Press.

A similar warning in regard to the dangerous character of the policy of “ war to the bitter end ” had been expressed, as early as two years before the advent of the Russian Revolution, by the author of a diary kept in the year 1915, parts of which have seen the light of day in recent issues of a well-known London weekly paper. These are the truly prophetic

words written on March 23, 1915, by the distinguished author of this diary, who hides his name under the initials F. W. H. :

Statesmanship has no right to contemplate war to the bitter end. The time may be near when it will be possible to consult the needs of humanity as well as to secure our war aims. If such an opportunity is lost, the war will not go on for ever. It will end in revolutionary chaos, beginning no one can say where, and ending no one can say how.

To suppose for a moment that such grave considerations could have failed to occupy most seriously the minds of the leading statesman in all belligerent countries, on both sides, would imply an undeserved reflection on their intelligence as well as on their patriotism. Nor could it be supposed that the Allied Governments, with all the ample means of gathering information at their disposal, were not fully aware of the fact—since placed beyond any doubt by the publication of the various *Documents and Statements relating to Peace Proposals and War Aims, December 1916–November 1918*, with an introduction by G. Lowes Dickinson—that Germany in the spring of 1917 had already reached the limit of her strength, a fact which, as Count Czernin, the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, in his secret report to his Sovereign of April 2, 1917, avers, “responsible leaders in Berlin did not seek to deny,” and that consequently the powerful currents in favour of peace were countered solely by the desperate determination of the militarists in power to make only a victorious peace. In regard to this, G. Lowes Dickinson remarks that it “should be borne in mind in estimating the policy of the Allied Governments, for their attitude would react on the state of parties in Germany, would strengthen the peace elements if it were conciliatory, and, if otherwise, play into the hands of the militarists.”

Be that as it may, it was plain that conditions were favourable for the initiation of negotiations aiming at the conclusion of a general peace and that, in the absolutely desperate position in which Russia found herself, it was downright madness not to make at least an attempt to induce the Allies to enter upon joint negotiations to that effect.

In the prevailing helpless bewilderment the Kerensky Government seem to have had a vague inkling of the necessity of something being undertaken in that sense, but were

apparently unable to understand precisely what it was that should be done and how to attempt to do it. In an assembly, mainly composed of members of the Soviets of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates, convoked by Kerensky under the pretentious and peculiar designation of "Fore-Parliament," endless discussions took place as to the instructions to be given to Russia's representative at a conference expected to be held in Paris by the Allied Powers for the revision of so-called war aims. Finally, however, it was announced that the conference was not to deal with the terms of peace at all.

After many fruitless attempts at obtaining an interview with the dictator Kerensky himself, and having become convinced with intense horror and despair that the new revolution was imminent, with its unavoidable sequel of anarchy and civil war, I determined to make one last effort to obtain a hearing, and addressed on October 22nd (4th November) the following letter to one of the Ministers, a wealthy manufacturer and a gentleman :

"I approach you, Sir, to whom, as representative of some of the most important business interests, it cannot possibly be indifferent whether our country is entirely ruined and thrown into the abyss of civil war and anarchy by the policy of the ideologues of 'War at any cost' and 'War until a final victory,' I approach you with the request—nay, I implore you to give me at least a hearing and to give me a chance to explain to you the considerations derived from the experience gained by long years of participation in affairs of State and negotiations concerning the gravest interests of Russia, which lead me to think that even at this late hour it might be possible, as it is imperatively required, to reach an agreement with our Allies in regard to the earliest possible beginning of peace negotiations with the enemy."

No answer was ever returned to this letter. Three days later the Government was overthrown, and the Ministers—except Kerensky, who had sought and found safety in timely flight—were prisoners in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul.

CHAPTER XL

Bolshevism—Its origin and dangers—Trotzky's statement—German influence—We escape from Russia—At Murmansk—Admiral Kemp—Visit to Berlin—Conditions there—Privy Councillor Kriege—At Stockholm—Reflections—The end.

THE sinister meaning to the whole world of that fatal date, October 25th, old style, or November 7th, new style, of the year 1917, the date that marked the passing of Russia as a civilized State, does not seem as yet to be fully realized. The world is still too much under the influence of war psychosis to look upon events of the recent past from any other point of view than that of their relationship to the late international contest, or rather to the international contest ended only in appearance. Thus the advent of Bolshevism as a world power, which dates from that fatal day, has so far seemingly failed to be comprehended in all its ominous significance. Nor has the real meaning of its appearance in Russia been sufficiently dissociated as it should have been from the coincident circumstance that the journey to Russia of Lenin and other leaders of Bolshevism had been facilitated by the German Government and that their pockets had been filled with German gold, just as in 1894 our revolutionary parties had been financed by Japan, and that the result of their activities had substantially benefited the military situation of Germany.

Of all the misunderstandings and misrepresentations of Bolshevik Russia (says Mr. Saylor in *Russia, White or Red*), the one which is least creditable to an intelligent world is that which has identified Lenin and his counsellors with German Imperial power. Germany did not invent Bolshevism in order to disrupt Russia. Bolshevism is a definite social programme, as definite as the programme of military imperialism of the Hohenzollerns and utterly incompatible with it. . . . Germany simply saw in Bolshevism a means of keeping her Eastern neighbour temporarily impotent in a military way, and for

the sake of this gain she was willing to take the desperate chance of revolution spreading to her own masses. Lenin, on the other hand, felt that he could afford to take aid from Germany and execute German orders outwardly for the opportunity which peace would give him to flood the German proletariat with revolutionary propaganda. It was simply a case of two desperate and uncompromising enemies, each playing with fire to defeat the will of the other. Wilhelm was pitted against Lenin in deadly combat, and Lenin, with the aid of Foch, won.

It will hardly be denied that Bolshevism—that is to say, Marxian Communism—is but the logically developed extreme form of Socialism, that most dangerous delusion which has ever swayed the minds of mankind: delusion, because its aim—the elimination from the social life of the human race of the inequality of conditions borne of the natural inequality of men and of the development of civilization from its very inception among them—is unattainable save by a return to primæval barbarism; dangerous, because, in the pursuit of its Utopia, it aims at the destruction of the very foundations on which rests the structure of civilized society and because it panders to and thrives on the basest instincts of the human soul, the instincts of envy and of hate. The advent to power of Bolshevism meant the opening of a relentless warfare against the social system as it has been gradually evolved through the ages from the historical development of civilization among men—in other words, against the present-day “Capitalistic,” or, rather, to use a more comprehensive term, “Bourgeois” Society. If there could ever have been any doubt as to the reality of the ambitious, all-embracing and sinister aims of Bolshevism, such doubt should be set at rest by the unequivocal defence of Red Terrorism, in a statement issued, it seems by Trotzky, on October 5, 1920, reproduced in translation in the Sunday edition of the *New York Herald* of November 21st, in which, among other startlingly outspoken assertions, he is made to say:

The Bourgeoisie in the present epoch is a sinking class. It no longer plays an essential part in production, but, by its imperialist methods of acquisition, it ruins the world's economic order and ruins human civilization. Nevertheless, the tenacity of the Bourgeoisie is colossal. It hangs on and does not want to go. By this very fact

it threatens to drag all society with it over the precipice. The Bourgeoisie must be torn out, cut off. The Red Terror is an instrument used against a class doomed to go under and that does not want to go under.

And he concludes :

If, even before the war, it was sheer Utopianism to expect that the expropriation of the propertied classes could be carried out quietly and painlessly, without risings, armed conflicts, attempts at counter-revolution and harsh repressions, the situation created by the imperialistic war will render doubly and trebly fierce that near and unavoidable civil strife of which there can be one, and only one, termination—the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The World War has furnished the opportunity for the successful inauguration of the campaign the ultimate aim of which is so grandiloquently and brazenly set forth in Trotzky's statement. The assault was primarily directed against the social fortress, so fatally divided against itself, at its weakest front—the Russian Bourgeois Society, weakest numerically as well as morally, and hardly able or even resolved to attempt to defend itself. The fatal outcome of this assault the world is witnessing to-day without perhaps realizing to its full extent its menace to civilization and the dangerous nature of the attraction which the Russian proletariat's triumph might possess in the eyes of the proletariat in more advanced and more happily situated countries. For it should not be lost sight of that the armature of the proud and imposing edifice of bourgeois society has for years been subjected to a weakening process from within by some of its own deluded inhabitants and been eaten into by the canker of doubt of its solidity and lack of faith in the righteousness of its very foundations. As Alfred Noyes has it : " It may be said with the utmost seriousness that the intellectual Bolshevism which has been prevalent during the last fifty years has been more responsible for both the Great War and for the present peril of civilization, than has yet been properly realized. You cannot treat all the laws that keep us from chaos as if they were scraps of paper without a terrible reckoning ; but this is what the intellectuals have been doing for half a century in their novels, plays and poems."

A no less pessimistic view of the situation is expressed by another distinguished writer in a recent article in the *English Review* :

The human world (writes Mr. Robert Briffault) is suffering to-day from the crumbling of the very foundations on which it has been built. Broadly and fundamentally regarded—and it is the broadest and most fundamental view alone that can avail us in our present need—the situation is this : The human world in all its aspects, political, social, ethical, spiritual, æsthetic, has been built upon fictitious conventions, once held sacred, held at the worst to be expedient and convenient. *Those conventions are to-day no longer believed.* That, and no less, is the appalling gravity of the situation. The very ground upon which the world stood is cracking and sagging beneath it. . . . The unrealities upon which the human world was founded were for a long time pragmatically true ; they were not, indeed, believed because they “worked,” but they “worked” because they were believed. . . . But when the multitudinous, essential and fundamental foundations of the world which they are called upon to carry on have become unveracities to the multitude the breaking-point is reached. And we have reached that breaking-point.

And, as between the Bolsheviks and the Bourgeoise, the author seems to think the Bolsheviks will win “because they have the motive power, belief in their ideal, which our bourgeois civilization has not.”

The ill-omened character of the moral atmosphere in which European mankind breathed in the period preceding the World War was aggravated by the recklessness with which the propertied classes were wont to flaunt their boundless luxury and extravagance in the faces of the sullen masses seething with discontent, envy and class hatred. The ominously growing and sinister current of popular feeling was, indeed, for a time diverted by the outbreak of the war into the supposedly safer channel of international hatred. But—and here I must again refer to the above-mentioned statement by Trotzky in which he quotes from an article, written by himself five years ago, the following comments :

Imperialism tore society by force out of its state of unstable equilibrium. It burst open the lock-gates with which Social Democracy had dammed up the flood of proletarian revolutionary energy and directed that flood into its course. This monstrous historical experiment, which at one blow broke the Socialist Internationale, is the bearer at the same time of mortal danger to bourgeois society itself.

The hammer has been wrung from the hands of the worker and replaced by the sword. The worker, bound hand and foot by the apparatus of the capitalist economic system, is suddenly torn away from all this and taught to put collective interests higher than his domestic happiness, than his very life. With the arms made by himself in his hands, the worker is placed in a situation where the political fate of the State depends directly upon him. Those who in normal times oppressed and despised him now flatter him and try to curry favour. At the same time he comes into intimate contact with those very cannon which, according to Lassalle, form the keystone of the constitution.

Even if the advanced among the workers were theoretically aware of the fact that force is the midwife of right, their political thinking nevertheless remained permeated with the spirit of possibilism and accommodation to bourgeois legality. Now the worker is learning in practice to despise this legality and to destroy it by force. The static attitude of mind gives way to the dynamic. Heavy artillery thunders the idea into his head that in cases where it is impossible to go round an obstacle the possibility remains of smashing it. Almost the whole adult male population has been put through this school of war, fearful in its social realism, that is creating a new human type.

The clenched fist of iron necessity is now raised above all the norms of bourgeois society—over its law, its morality and its religion. "Necessity knows no law," said the German Chancellor on August 4, 1914. Monarchs came down into the market-places in order to accuse each other of lying, after the manner of fishwives. Governments trampled on the obligations they had solemnly recognized, and the National Church chained its Lord God, like a convict, to the national cannon.

Is it not obvious that such conditions must give rise to profound changes in working-class psychology and radically cure the workmen of the hypnosis of legality which was cast upon them during a period of political stagnation? The propertied classes will soon, to their horror, have the occasion to convince themselves of this.

The proletariat, graduates of the school of war, will feel the need of force at the first serious obstacle they meet within their own countries. "Necessity knows no law"; they will throw that phrase in the faces of those who try to stop them with the laws of bourgeois legality. And the terrible economic distress which will gradually appear during the war, and especially after its end, will drive the masses to break many and many laws.

It would have been impossible, it would seem, to have expressed in more lucid, more convincing and at the same time truly prophetic terms a solemn warning against the monstrous folly of the suicidal internecine war between the leading nations of Europe under the inspiration and leadership of their ruling bourgeois classes; a warning

propounded to the unbelieving bourgeois society of all nations five years ago by the ablest leader of its most dangerous enemy, the International Proletariat ; a warning, of course, not intended as such, every word of which, however, would have been worthy of being weighed with the most thoughtful care and which, as far as unhappy Russia is concerned, has already come true.

This warning, at the time—five years ago—when it was published, had, indeed, been penned by an obscure political exile, a Russian Jew, whose writings, if they happened to be noticed at all, were probably classified as ordinary Socialist propaganda and accordingly given but little attention. Nor could it have been foreseen that the day was near when the obscure political exile would become one of the two usurping autocrats who hold in the grip of their sanguinary tyranny the greatest of all European countries and a nation of still some 130 to 150 million people, and wield a power with which the proudest Governments are compelled to reckon. But the predictions he uttered in 1915 in regard to the dangerous influence which the indefinite prolongation of the war was bound to exercise on the psychology of the millions of human beings who were shedding their blood on the battlefields of Europe were based on a reasoning the soundness of which no statesmanship, however spurious, could fail to perceive nor could afford to question. War psychosis may have blinded the rulers of all the belligerent nations to the existence of this danger, or have caused it to be held to be too remote, or its gravity to be underrated. However, the seizure of power in Russia by the Bolsheviks should have opened their eyes not only to the fact that, as far as Russia was concerned, the international war was definitively and irrevocably closed and turned into a class war inside the nation, but also to the deeper meaning for the rest of the world of this portentous event.

The curtain had risen on the first act of the world's coming new drama, the moving forces of which had been slowly gathering and maturing in the course of the last century and which were now to open the decisive struggle between the present so-called capitalistic or bourgeois civilization and Bolshevism bent on the destruction of its very foundations—a fight to the bitter end, to conquer or to perish.

Bolshevism, or what was practically the same thing under other names, had thrice before attempted to raise its sinister head : in the French Revolution of 1848 and the Paris Commune in 1871, and in Russia in 1906. All three attempts have failed : in France because the structure of bourgeois society proved solid enough to withstand any assault by the forces of destruction and the bourgeoisie had spirit and determination enough to inflict on its assailants a crushing defeat ; in Russia because the bulk of the Army having remained faithful to its oath, the Imperial Government succeeded in propping up the tottering edifice of the State, so as to make it last some years longer. But now Bolshevism, having established in Russia its own autocracy of a sanguinary tyrannical type, such as much-decried Tsarism never even had dreamed of, and holding absolute command of all the remaining and still immense resources of what had been a colossal and prosperous Empire, had secured a formidable base from which to launch forth its brazen defiance to the world and its insidious propaganda of ruthless class warfare against bourgeois society fatally enfeebled by having been for more than three years engaged with suicidal frenzy in an internecine war for military and political supremacy in Europe.

Under these conditions Bolshevism was bound to become a most serious menace to the civilized world, not so much on account of its attempts at putting into practical operation the unworkable Utopian doctrines of Socialism or Communism—the unavoidable and disastrous results of which could only be helpful in disillusioning the deluded believers in these doctrines—as because their success in ousting the bourgeoisie and usurping all the powers of the State could not but exercise a powerfully tempting fascination on the minds of the proletariat of other countries, ignorant of the real condition of things in Russia. In proclaiming to the world their provocative summons, “ Proletarians of all countries, unite ! ” the Bolsheviks could point to their own triumphant achievement inviting imitation.

Bolshevism as a world movement had become a most serious menace to the whole system of our present-day civilization, and as such should have been recognized as the common enemy of all. To put it down by a united effort

in the common interest before it had acquired any further momentum would, one should think, have been the part of wisdom. As long, however, as the World War, which was undermining and ruining perhaps for generations the prosperity of the bourgeois-governed countries engaged in it, was suffered to continue, no effectual effort at combating Bolshevism could be thought of, since it was the war itself that had enabled Bolshevism to raise its head and to thrive on the discontent and despair of the warring peoples which it brought in its train.

Purblind war psychosis alone could imagine that the fundamental object of Bolshevism was to promote German imperialistic aims because some of its leaders were supposed to have been, or had actually been, suborned with German gold. Bolshevism was pursuing an openly proclaimed and much more dangerous aim than assisting the success of German arms, or else the defeat of Germany would have settled its fate as well. But, far from this having been the case, we see now that the total collapse of Germany and her associates has only served to increase the menace of Bolshevism by widening the circle where its propaganda may count upon a receptive mood among peoples reduced to the extreme of abasement and despair and embittered by their long-borne suffering and misery, for which they hold their ruling classes responsible.

Nor was the hope of German militarists and Russia-haters, of being able to secure the dismemberment and final elimination of Russia as a potent factor in world politics, by feloniously compounding with Bolshevism, based on any sounder comprehension of the reality of the situation created by the advent of Bolshevism as the *de facto* Government of a great country and its consequent growth as a formidable menace to the civilized world.

One would think that it would have been sufficiently clear to the rulers of all the countries engaged in the World War, on both sides, that there was only one way to meet the common danger threatening them all and to deal effectively and decisively once for all with the menace of Bolshevism, and that was the immediate conclusion of peace between the belligerents and their armed intervention, jointly or by mandate to one of them, for the purpose of aiding the disarmed

people of Russia to depose the Bolshevik usurpers before they had time to organize their Army, and to re-establish a civilized Government of their own choice.

What stood in the way of the adoption of such a policy, so evidently suited to the real interests of all concerned and, indeed, of civilization itself, was, on both sides, the determination of the militaristically thinking elements predominating among the rulers of the belligerent countries not to terminate the war otherwise than by a "knock-out blow" dealt to the adversary, and by a peace by dictation, and furthermore on one side the hatred and fear of Germany, and on the other the hatred and fear of Russia.

The failure to adopt such a policy in obedience to the dictates, not of sentiment, but of reason and statesmanship, has led to results which the world is contemplating to-day in sorrow and consternation.

As far as Russia was concerned, it was plain from the moment of the unopposed seizure of power by the Bolsheviks that her fate was sealed unless something could be done to enable those elements which constituted the still existing nucleus of the political apparatus of the former State to re-establish a Government of law and order—that is to say, the Monarchy—which alone could have saved the country from disruption and anarchy. That was still possible as long as that nucleus had not been definitively destroyed or dispersed and the Red Army which the Bolsheviks were trying to raise for the consolidation of their power was still in the initial stage of its organization. But it was no less plain that these elements could not by any possibility come forward to any serious purpose unless they had the support of an armed force to rely on. Such an armed force could only come from the outside, since the National Army, having been disbanded, or rather having disbanded itself, no longer existed as a fighting force and its remnants could not be relied on for the support of law and order no more than for opposition to a foreign invasion. What was needed, consequently, for the salvation of the country—if indeed its salvation was considered desirable—was the conclusion with the least possible delay of a general peace and an agreement between the former belligerents to assist in the re-establishment of the Russian Empire in the only way in which such assistance could effectually be rendered.

Such a solution might have commended itself in the interest of the reorganization of the community of European States on a basis rendering possible their peaceable coexistence in the future. Under existing conditions, however, in the all-pervading atmosphere of war psychosis, the salvation of Russia was evidently no concern of friend or foe, nor even of those Russians in whose eyes loyalty to the Allies possessed a claim to their allegiance superior to that of their own country's vital interests and very existence. Any hope, therefore, based on the possibility of such a solution was manifestly doomed to disappointment. And yet it was the only hope left to those—and they were not as few as indifference to the fate of the Russian people was inclined to suppose—to whom the salvation of their country meant everything and primed every other consideration. It was the straw at which a drowning man would clutch before sinking to his doom.

But the pursuit of this only remaining hope was possible only if an organ could be found to plead the cause of Russia's salvation. There existed no longer any power in Russia entitled to delegate to anyone due authority to speak in her name. Nor was it possible under the regime of terrorism established by the Bolsheviki for any political organization, or group of people, to meet for the purpose of discussing the situation and of empowering anyone to act as their spokesman abroad.

Such were the conditions existing when, being determined not to leave a stone unturned in the fight for peace and for my country's salvation, I made up my mind to undertake the self-imposed mission of placing myself in contact with both sides in the contest, as well as with the neutral Powers, in an endeavour to discover a way in which the initiation of peace negotiations might be brought about. I was, of course, fully aware of the quixotic nature and hopelessness of such an undertaking, as well as of the probable obloquy, contemptible suspicions and even ridicule to which I exposed myself in doing, nevertheless, what I considered to be my sacred duty by my unfortunate country. I must own, however, that I was somewhat astonished when, having through the kind and unremitting efforts of the United States Minister at Stockholm, Mr. Ira Nelson Morris, an old friend

of happier days in America, obtained permission to have my passports *viséd* for the journey to New York, I found that I was, by order of the Russian Minister at Stockholm, refused by the Russian Consulate-General passports for myself and family on the plea that I was suspected of being a Bolshevist agent, and that I had been visiting Berlin in the course of the summer of 1918, and furthermore I found that the permission already granted to have my papers *viséd* at the American Consulate-General had suddenly been revoked by cabled orders from Washington, presumably in consequence of some denunciation to the Inter-Allied Passport Control emanating from the same Russian source. This permission was restored some days later, thanks to a renewed intercession in my favour by Mr. Morris, who stood by me in this matter as a faithful friend, a broad-minded statesman and a true gentleman.

The story of our flight from Russia and my subsequent movements I told in a long letter addressed from Stockholm to an old friend and former colleague, with whose consent I reproduce it below :

GRAND HOTEL, STOCKHOLM,
December 30, 1918.
January 26, 1919.

MY DEAR LORD BRYCE,

I am extremely sorry our correspondence should have suffered such a very long interruption owing to conditions beyond our control. I wrote to you shortly after our arrival here, but perhaps my letter never reached you. So I shall begin by telling you again in as few words as possible the long story of our escape from that hell on earth which calls itself Petrograd. As soon as things began to look absolutely desperate I began to prepare for our flight. The difficulties in the way were very great indeed. After several enforced postponements we got off at last on the 9th of May—I mean myself, wife and daughter and two old devoted servants. Six days later we reached Murmansk safe and sound but half starved, as the provisions we had with us were beginning to give out. There we were comparatively safe, as the local Bolshevik authorities were sufficiently cowed by the presence in port of some English men-of-war and some English and French soldiers on shore. But on arrival we found that the only Russian steamer that had been plying between Murmansk and the Norwegian port Vardö had been sunk that very morning by some German submarine and all chances of getting away seemed to be gone for God knows how long. There were some 3,000 to 4,000 foreign refugees encamped there waiting for steamers to take them to England. To return would have meant the risk of arrest and possibly imprison-

ment as hostages, an awful fate from which we had just escaped. To remain at Murmansk was equally out of the question, as there was no shelter to be found except in some international sleeping-cars detained there through the breakdown of a bridge over the Kola River, which we had just crossed on foot over some temporary scaffolding. In this very serious plight it occurred to me to write to Rear-Admiral Kemp, who was then on board his flagship, and to explain to him quite frankly that my object in being so anxious to leave the country was not only to seek safety in flight for me and mine, but also to try to utilize whatever political credit may be accorded to me abroad on account of my long service in diplomacy, in an endeavour to find out by placing myself in contact with both sides whether it would not be possible to discover some common ground upon which both sides might agree to come together with a view to initiate negotiations for the conclusion of a general peace, because I felt convinced that the only possible salvation for my unhappy country, the only possible way of preventing her sinking with every month ever deeper into the sanguinary mire of anarchy and civil war, would have been the earliest possible conclusion of a general peace, and that I requested to be allowed to come on board his ship for the purpose of giving him fuller explanations, as I desired particularly to avoid his being under any misapprehension as to my plans. He replied immediately by a short note, which I shall ever treasure most highly, as it is so truly characteristic of the spirit of an English sailor and gentleman. I transcribe it here textually :

"I will do everything I can to help you and will come to see you to-day at 5 p.m. Your letter has much touched me."

I asked him, of course, not to take the trouble to call on us, as I really had no place in our car where I could receive him and have a private talk with him. But come he would, and he had even put on for the occasion a Russian Order which, under existing circumstances, he could hardly have had any satisfaction in wearing. You might call this a very small matter indeed, but the fine delicacy of feeling which prompted this action touched us deeply. In short, nothing could have exceeded the courtesy and kindness he showed us during our stay at Murmansk—not to mention his generosity in keeping us provided with bread and sugar and other things of prime necessity for keeping body and soul together, as our supply had given out and nothing could be had for love nor money in that God-forsaken place. Three days later he had occasion to send off an English high official, Mr. de Candaule, a most charming gentleman with whom I had endless most interesting conversations during our six days' sail down the beautiful coast of Norway, and the British Consul from Rostov-on-the-Don, whose state-room I shared on the Norwegian steamer from Vardö. The Admiral availed himself of this occasion to send us off to Vardö, my party and a family of French refugees, on a little Russian naval vessel which he had commandeered for the purpose, convoyed by two English trawlers, on one of which went our English official fellow-travellers. So we felt entirely safe both

from possible attacks by German submarines and from any molestation by the most forbidding-looking Bolshevik commissary who accompanied us on the Russian vessel. But final relief we only felt when we set foot on the deck of the Norwegian steamer and realized that after months of weary waiting between hope and despair we had at last definitely escaped from the unhappy country of our birth and devoted affection which a lot of criminal bandits and demented fanatics had turned into a prison, a lunatic asylum and a slaughter-house. The day after the Admiral's visit to our sleeping-car I lunched with him on board his flagship, and after luncheon had a long and exhaustive exchange of views with him. He evidently realized that I was merely doing my duty as a Russian patriot in attempting a task which, howsoever hopeless it might appear, I held to be bound to undertake in order to help saving what still could be saved from my country's wreck brought about by the war and the Revolution, just as I fully understood that he was only doing his duty as an English patriot in working with might and main for a continuation of the war in the interest of his country whatsoever might become of mine. We parted as friends, and he came to see us off on board ship the morning we sailed. His hand was the last I shook on leaving my country for God only knows how long; perchance for ever. As soon as we reached here, on the 29th of May, after a twenty days' journey, I was most anxious to get into touch with the representatives of the Entente Powers. Fortunately I found here two old acquaintances from happier times in America—Sir Esme Howard and Mr. Ira Nelson Morris—and lost no time in acquainting them with my plans as well as, a little later on, the French Minister, Mr. Thiebaut. I handed all of them short memoranda on the subject with the request to submit them to their respective Governments. It was not before the end of June that I secured at last through the German Minister here his Government's consent to my visiting Berlin. Baron Lucius seemed to be personally very much opposed to his Government's policy in their dealings with the Bolsheviks, and probably thought that my presence in Berlin might contribute towards opening their eyes in regard to the dangerous character of that policy. Be that as it may, he succeeded, although apparently only after prolonged negotiations between the Wilhelmstrasse and Army Headquarters, in securing for me the necessary permits. I arrived in Berlin at an interesting moment, in the midst of the Kuehlmann crisis. The Foreign Department treated me with formal courtesy but with great reserve, so that, barring a few minutes' exchange of social amenities with Kuehlmann, an old colleague of former days in Washington, I never even set my eyes on Hintze nor the Chancellor. This, however, did not prevent my gaining a pretty good insight into the inner workings of their diplomatic kitchen, which did not strike me as in any way superior to our own institution of the same kind as it was in my day. No difficulties whatever were placed in the way of my perfectly free intercourse with prominent personalities in political, financial, literary or journalistic circles. No watch was

kept over my movements, and I was perfectly free to observe the conditions of things and, so to speak, to feel the pulse of the people in any way accessible to a foreigner knowing the language of the country well enough so as to pass in a crowd unobserved and undetected. I could talk to you by the hour about all the interesting things I had occasion to observe and will not fail to do so if ever again I have the good fortune to meet you over a cup of tea at the Athenæum. For the present I'll have to limit myself to saying that the impressions I carried away from Berlin after a few weeks' sojourn were, briefly summarized, as follows:

The Emperor as an active factor in politics had vanished from the scene.

All power, military as well as political, was concentrated in the hands of General Ludendorff, the actual dictator of Germany.

Such credit as the military caste, junkerdom and "All-deutschdom" ever enjoyed in the popular mind was entirely gone, broken down under the weight of utter ruin and bitter disillusion as the only fruits of so many years of patriotically borne hardship and suffering.

All the people, from the highest down to the lowest, were heartily sick of the war and were sighing for peace.

The great majority of the people were ready for peace at any price short of dishonour and destruction of their country.

The remaining minority were ready for acceptance of any terms of peace satisfying the essential and just demands of the Allies covered by the principles proclaimed by President Wilson.

This would likewise be the position to which the Government would be compelled to come down by pressure from below, peace negotiations having been set on foot for good.

The Government were quite sincere in their official declarations except that they did not go as far as they were actually prepared to go, such reticence being due either to the belief that that was the most skilful way of playing their hands or else to weak-kneed subservience to the small but noisy band of "All-deutsch" fanatics and to the Ludendorff clique at Army Headquarters.

The dismissal of Kuehlmann cannot be held to be a case in point showing the necessity of such subservience, because, as I was being assured from all sides, that, had he but bravely stuck to his guns instead of meekly recanting the very next day after his famous speech, he would have had behind him the overwhelming majority of the nation, he would have become the most popular man in the country, and would have made his position unassailable or been promoted to that of Chancellor.

My own personal conclusion drawn from these impressions gathered during my several weeks' stay in Berlin confirmed me in the conviction I had held ever since December 1916 and had been expressing in open letters, articles in the newspapers when possible, and several pamphlets over my signature ever since the spring of 1917, namely, that the war could have been ended and peace be had at any time on conditions entirely satisfactory to our coalition, Germany not

being in a position, quite independently of the military situation, to avoid the acceptance of any such terms.

Such a peace would, of course, have been a peace of conciliation reached by negotiation, and not a peace of dictation. Which of the two would have been a better one I shall not attempt to discuss.

The future will show whether the result of the World War, as it appears now, viz. the rise and growth of "Bolshevism" with the consequent extinction of Russia as a political entity, the destruction of three great Empires with a population of more than three hundred millions, their utter abasement, their threatened begging and economic enslavement, and, last but not least, what may be termed the "Balkanization" of Eastern Europe—whether all this will have been conducive to bringing about the elimination of war as the only means of settling differences of real moment between nations or whether it will merely have prepared the ground for a series of new and perhaps still more terrible wars in the future.

The mission I had volunteered to undertake had failed. This result of apparently so quixotic an enterprise was to have been foreseen. Indeed, I had not failed to foresee and discount in advance its almost certain failure. But neither this nor any consideration of my personal ease and quietude of any apprehension of misinterpretation of my motives or obloquy by the ignorant and the malevolent would have deterred me from doing what I held to be a sacred duty by my country which no one else would have been in a position to undertake.

But I had still another duty to perform, no less sacred and even more urgent, that of saving the unfortunate city of my home from the awful fate in store for her unless armed help were to appear in time. Now, it is self-evident that such help, to which we might have had some claim, could not by any conceivable possibility be rendered the doomed city by our Allies. Nothing remained, therefore, but to seek such assistance from the enemy to whom it would have been an easy matter to occupy Petersburg with their troops, of whom they had a more than ample number stationed at Narva and at Pskoff, within two days' march from the capital. With this end in view I returned to Berlin. The difficulties I had to contend with there were due to the fact that the whole plan of Germany's insane policy in regard to Bolshevistic Russia had been fathered by a group of fanatic Russia-haters having at their head a certain Privy Councillor Kriege, the most influential member of the Foreign Office Staff, one of those pestilential doctrinaires of "Macht Politik" who, in no lesser degree than the military caste and junkerdom and "All-deutsch" demagoguery, have been guilty of bringing down upon their country the catastrophe of her inglorious collapse. This policy, however, had been endorsed by General Ludendorff evidently from purely strategic motives and was being pursued by him with his usual ruthlessness. There seems to be no doubt about all the proceedings at Brest-Litovsk having been directly inspired by and carried out under categorical orders of that all-powerful dictator of Germany. Although the whole of this

so-called "Ost Politik" was openly condemned by the leading organs of the Conservative as well as of the Liberal and even the Socialist parties, and the Government's dealings with Russian Bolshevism were spoken of by the better elements with unconcealed loathing, the Government could not be brought to break openly and categorically with the Bolshevistic usurpers of power in Russia with whom they had concluded that shameful "supplementary treaty," signed by Kriege and Von Hintze, about the division of the stolen goods (the gold reserve of the Bank of Russia). It was not before a couple of days before the outbreak of the Revolution that they picked up at last courage enough to order the expulsion of that man Joffe who had been masquerading as representative of Russia in the house which was formerly the Russian Embassy, and which he seems to have had converted into a kind of headquarters of the German revolutionists. When the great collapse of Germany occurred it became evident that no help for unfortunate Petersburg could any longer be expected to come from that quarter, and I returned to Stockholm, having given up all hope of any effectual help arriving in time to rescue the seven or eight hundred thousand unfortunate inhabitants still remaining in the doomed city from the awful fate in store for them. What that will mean let me illustrate by an example. A friend of mine, a wealthy widow, who escaped from that hell on earth some time ago, thanks to the energy and exertions of that grand old man, General Brändström, the Swedish Minister to whom so many unfortunates owe their escape, was obliged on leaving Petersburg to separate herself from her private secretary, a charming English girl to whom she was warmly attached, because that brave and high-minded young lady would not abandon her old father, a formerly very wealthy English merchant settled there for fifty years and now, having lost some years ago all his fortune and latterly every possible means of earning a livelihood, entirely dependent on his daughter's support. Yesterday—I am writing these lines on January 11th—my friend received from her former secretary a letter brought here by some fugitive in which she tells the harrowing tale of how she had just closed the eyes of her poor old father and his brother, who had been slowly dying of starvation amidst terrible sufferings, she herself being hardly able to stand up and move about. Now, that is merely one case in many thousands, not to mention the thousands of "hostages," among them, maybe, some of my personal friends, who are being slowly starved to death in Bolshevik prisons in daily fear of summary execution. So you may imagine how deeply I feel about all this. It is a great pity that the whole truth about the real condition of things in Russia does not seem to be known nor understood abroad. It seems to me that the proud assurance that "Bolshevism is the disease of defeated nations" is based on a very superficial view of Bolshevism and the deep-lying causes of its rise and sudden growth. It is not the fact that defeat produces this disease. On the contrary, it was the introduction and the spread of the deadly infection of Bolshevism among the armed forces of both

nations which caused the defeat first of Russia and then of Germany. The former view is just as erroneous as was the conception so long prevalent in Allied countries of the true meaning of the Russian Revolution.

When Dr. E. J. Dillon, in his remarkable book, *The Eclipse of Russia*, page 17, describes the history of the Russian Revolution as the "tale of a fatal psychological error and its sequel," he is unquestionably right. He is no less right when he says that the "blast that destroyed the Monarchy and shattered the nation came directly from the Duma leaders" in whose supposedly competent judgment those who—as Dr. Dillon seems to think—"aided and abetted them" must have placed greater confidence than it deserved. But then theirs was merely the "blast," catastrophically fatal, indeed, in its consequences, but prompted by motives the very opposite of those which swayed the mutinous soldiers and sailors and revolutionary workmen who actually achieved the overthrow of the Government. Besides its true underlying meaning as a revolt of the people against the war, the Russian Revolution carried, however, a still wider meaning, to which I cannot help referring here again, going far beyond the confines of Russia. "It meant the beginning of the awakening of the toiling masses, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the people of every country, to a realization of the fact that this war—as indeed might be said of most wars since history began—had been forced on them by their rulers as an outcome of policies which to the ruling classes represent the tempting phantoms of Glory, of Hegemony, of Prestige, of Revenge, but which to the masses present themselves merely as shibboleths devoid of meaning in terms of the life of plain men and women, for the pursuit of which they have, however, to pay with the lives of millions of their sons and brothers, with millions of ruined homes, and with all the untold misery and suffering that could never be compensated by the most crushing victory. It further meant that when the day of their final awakening shall have dawned upon the masses they will make a day of reckoning with their rulers, and that this fratricidal war between the nations may resolve itself into a fratricidal and suicidal war between the masses and the classes within the nations."

The part of wisdom, it would seem, would have been to have heeded the warning before it was too late.

It was the failure to have done so that has delivered Russia into the hands of "Bolshevism" with its social anarchy, civil war and utter ruin and destruction of the social and political fabric of the State, because it enabled the Bolshevik leaders to assure themselves of the unflinching support of the Army and Navy by promising them immediate peace. Germany, it would seem, is now being overtaken by a similar fate, hastened on by the insane policy of her rulers in regard to Bolshevistic Russia.

The phenomenal ease and rapidity with which Soldiers' and Workmen's Soviets on the Russian model succeeded in usurping power in many places in Germany cannot be said to bode any good to any-

body for the future. These events demonstrate the exceedingly dangerous character of the fascinations which the successful establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia seems to exercise over the popular mind ignorant of the unspeakably wretched condition to which triumphant Bolshevism has reduced a once great and prosperous nation.

The problem of the immediate future of Russia is one of unexampled difficulty. Its sinister import should never be lost sight of, and its solution is urgently required in the common interest of civilized mankind, since, if Bolshevism be not now extirpated root and branch, and if it be suffered to spread any farther, it might ultimately come to mean the doom of our race and civilization. The task of seeking such a solution should be approached in a spirit entirely free from partisanship and from the passions of international hatred bred by the World War. Nothing could be more fatal in the present crisis in the country's history, when the very existence of the nation hangs in the balance, than the failure to recognize that it is the paramount, the sacred duty of every true patriot to be neither pro-Entente nor pro-German, but above all and exclusively pro-Russian. A case in point is presented by the fate that seems to be overtaking the Ukraina, the most fertile, the richest in natural resources of every kind, the most prosperous part of European Russia, which had escaped the infliction of Bolshevism owing to the timely assistance of German troops whose aid had been invoked by the Ukrainian nationalist Rada. This help was, of course, rendered from purely selfish motives, in the hope, never fully realized, of a temporary exploitation of the agricultural resources of the Ukraina for feeding the German people, but it unquestionably saved the country from Bolshevism. It was this assistance also which enabled General Skoropadsky, a most loyal patriot, gifted with a statesman's insight and undaunted courage, to seize the reins of power at a most critical moment, to revive the ancient historic institution of the hetmanate, to organize a free Government on liberal lines guaranteeing law and order, safety of life and property and all the conditions of civilized existence, to the shelter of which flocked hundreds of thousands of unhappy fugitives from Bolshevik Russia; in a word, to save for civilization this large part of European Russia, about a quarter of its surface, with some thirty million inhabitants, as a nucleus on the foundation of which, with the shattered parts of what was once the Empire of Russia, the reunited country might some day have been reconstructed as a political entity. It would seem that a man who had achieved so much in so short a period of time and under such exceptional difficulties might have counted on the unflinching support of all true patriots. Such support, however, he did not only not find where he had every right to expect it, but he was being run down and criticized by the very people who had found shelter under his Government; he was proclaimed a "pro-German"; his visit to the German Emperor was incriminated to him as an act of treason in regard to the Entente Powers, who, even if they had wished to, could

not possibly have extended to the Ukraina the assistance which alone had enabled him to achieve what he had accomplished in organizing the country as a civilized State; pressure had been put on him in order to cause him to reverse his wise and cautious policy in regard to the Ukrainian Nationalist Party and their dream of an Ukraina as an entirely self-contained State absolutely independent and separate from Russia and to prematurely and openly break with that party, thereby placing a most powerful weapon in the hands of the Socialist demagogue Petlura, who was aiming at the realization of that very dream. The result has been the overthrow of the hetman's Government, the installation of a socialistic regime under a so-called "directoriate," and the opening of the door to the advent in the near future, if it has not already taken place, of "Bolshevism" in the only part of what was once the Empire of Russia so far left standing erect as a civilized community. Thus have our politicians given us a fresh proof of their hopeless incompetence and unfitness to be the leaders of the nation. And now—I am writing these lines on the 21st of January—a post-mortem inquest is apparently being held by the Entente Powers on the dead body of Russia, the chief victim of the World War, expert evidence being furnished by some foreign diplomats and perhaps likewise by the former agents and the adherents of the various Governments, Imperial as well as Republican, and of the various parties whom all Russians, who still have kept the faculty of logical thinking, know to have been and whom the Russian people instinctively feel to have been the gravediggers of their country.

So this is the end of the country of my birth to whose service I have devoted a lifetime of unstinted effort in the cause of justice, of reason and of truth. You may imagine what my feelings have been all the time during the last reign and the Revolution, being condemned to stand by in impotent rage, a helpless witness of my country's gradual undoing and final downfall and ruin brought about by the insane foreign and domestic policy which I have been all along persistently opposing by word and pen to the best of my ability.

The only glimmer of hope I could discern now would be in the evolution out of the present chaos of a military dictatorship, such as must always be the outcome of a prolonged state of anarchy, if the teachings of history are to be believed. Some indications of the possibility of a similar development are already discernible. Admiral Koltchak, the head of the Siberian Government, having of late secured the adhesion or submission to his authority of Generals Denikin and Krasnoff of the Don Cossacks, has begun to use in his public utterances the language of a dictator conscious of his power and determined to render his will supreme. The task awaiting him is one of colossal magnitude and unequalled difficulty. To cope with it successfully will require a giant's strength, the strength of a Napoleon or a Peter the Great. God grant that this strength be given him, and he will become the saviour of his country.

I was much interested in a notice I saw the other day in some newspaper to the effect that President Wilson had received you with

Lord Grey, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Mr. Gilbert Murray as representatives of the Union for the Promotion of a League of Nations. You know how earnestly I am, heart and soul, in sympathy with the aim the Union pursues. There indeed lies unquestionably the best hope for the future of mankind. But are we really getting now much nearer the realization of our ideal? President Wilson, in his great speech in Rome, called attention to what seems to me to be the really crucial point—the need of a new international psychology. Now, the World War, just as it has been an outcome of, so also has it intensified the old traditional international psychology of distrust, of hatred and of revenge. One would, it strikes me, really be embarrassed to discover at present any indication of an abatement of the influence of this old psychology. Mr. Gilbert Murray, in his admirable preface to the English edition of his volume *Faith, War and Policy*, says: "The war-mood is one thing, and the settlement-mood is another." From what one can gather from Press accounts of the atmosphere surrounding the Paris Conference, the war-mood would seem to be still rather dominant there. It could hardly fail to shape the mental attitude of some at least of the members of the Conference in a sense rather inconsistent with President Wilson's conception of what a League of Nations should be. And then, such a League would not be complete if it did not include Russia with her population of still some 120 to 130 millions, without Poland and Finland. But who can tell when and how Russia will reappear reconstituted as a political entity and able to resume her place in the family of nations and her status as one of the Great Powers?

Furthermore, there is the formidable problem of "Bolshevism," which cannot be got out of the way by simply ignoring it and declaring Bolshevism to be a disease of defeated nations from which victor nations are immune. If one goes to the bottom of things, what, after all, is Bolshevism but the outbreak in a violent form of the chronic incurable disease with which all civilized mankind is and always will remain afflicted—the everlasting strife between those who "have" and those who "have not." Incurable, because there is not and there never can be a sufficiency of the good things of this world to go round and therefore their enjoyment will always be limited to an infinitely small minority, whereas the thirst for such enjoyment among the great majority will constantly grow as the difference between the luxury and comfort of the few and the want and misery of the many becomes even greater and more glaring. Discontent with, at best, the narrow limitations of a life condemned to incessant toil, joyless monotony and anxious insecurity, such as always must and will be the lot of the great majority of mankind, envy of the more fortunate and consequent class hatred—these are the germs of the disease. They are present everywhere. Their lying dormant for the time being does not preclude the possibility of their bearing fruit some day. That fruit will be Bolshevism, probably not in such a savage form as in Russia, but nevertheless ominously threatening to modern civilization. Then will become evident even to the most

purblind fanatic of international strife the supreme folly which led the ruling classes of the leading nations to waste untold milliards of their peoples' wealth on gigantic armaments and a fratricidal war of mutual extermination instead of devoting be it even a small part only of the colossal treasure thus wasted to the bettering as much as possible of the lot and the lightening of the burden of the toiling masses—the only possible way of preventing the rise and growth of revolutionary Socialism and its offspring: Bolshevism and Anarchy.

It is too late in the day now to waste time in deploring the folly that favoured the rise and growth of Bolshevism. The problem of how to deal with it stares us in the face now. Not Russia alone, or Germany, but all civilized mankind. One thing is certain, and it is this: the problem of Bolshevism can only be solved by all civilized mankind—I mean all, and therefore not excluding Germany—acting in concert to put it down with the strong arm. It was the suicidal feud between the ruling classes of the leading nations that created the opportunity for Bolshevism to raise its head. The continuance of that feud, whether in the shape of active military operations or of diplomatic or economic warfare, is sure to favour its growth. Therefore the earliest possible conclusion of a general peace and that a peace of reconciliation, is a prerequisite to a successful repression of Bolshevism. The ruling classes of all nations are a minority, but they have a sacred duty to perform, not towards themselves, which would be merely acting in self-defence, but towards their peoples, because the triumph of Bolshevism would mean the utter ruin not only of the classes but of the masses themselves as well. That is the lesson the installation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia is teaching the world.

Taken all in all, the prospect for the future does not seem to be a cheerful one, and the era of peace on earth and goodwill among mankind appears to be as far remote as ever.

Much, however, would be gained if, after the awful experience through which we are passing, mankind would come to comprehend at last the sinister and fatal fallacy of the famous dictum: "If you wish for peace, prepare for war." We have seen to what has led the endeavour to secure peace by preparing for war by means of powerful alliances and formidable, ever-growing armaments. On the other hand, the two great nations to whom of right should belong the undisputed leadership of mankind have shown the world how, not only war, but any danger of war, may be avoided successfully by preparing, not for war, but for peace. Ever since the conclusion of the convention of 1817 the boundary line of some three thousand miles dividing their territories on the continent of North America has remained absolutely defenceless on either side and the two nations have enjoyed the blessings of a century of uninterrupted peace, although on at least two occasions friction has arisen between them such as would have led most probably to an armed conflict between them if they had had in their respective capitals such institutions as "Grand General Staffs" on the European model, with pigeon-holes

full of elaborate plans of campaign for the invasion of their neighbour's dominions.

To anyone who doubts the possibility of such permanent peace, as human nature ever will allow of, being secured by the abolition of compulsory military service and by the reduction of the size of permanent professional armies to such dimensions as would be required for maintaining order in the interior—to anyone who entertains such doubts it will be sufficient to point to the shining example set the world by Great Britain and the United States of America.

That is where would lie the only hope for the future of mankind.

Yours very sincerely,

R. R.

My self-imposed mission, a forlorn hope, had failed, as I had fully expected. And yet its aim was one that might have enlisted sympathy rather than deserved disapproval, and its success—had it been possible—might have benefited the world. But the world was not, nor does it seem to be even now, ripe for real peace.

In winding up these reminiscences of a long life spent in the devoted service of my country, a tragic victim of the Moloch of war, I may, perhaps with propriety, venture to quote, from the concluding pages of the chapter entitled "What Men Died For," the lofty language of some of the passages in which Sir Philip Gibbs, in his wonderful book *Now It Can be Told*, has had the noble courage to give the world the unvarnished truth :

In each nation, even in Germany, there were men and women who saw the folly of the war and the crime of it, and desired to end it by some act of renunciation and repentance, and by some uplifting of the peoples' spirit to vault the frontiers of hatred and the barbed wire which hedged in patriotism. Some of them were put in prison. Most of them saw the impossibility of counteracting the forces of insanity which had made the world mad, and kept silent, hiding their thoughts and brooding over them. The leaders of the nations continued to use mob passion as their argument and justification, excited it anew when its fires burned low, focused it upon definite objectives and gave it a sense of righteousness by the high-sounding watchwords of liberty, justice, honour and retribution. . . . The peoples shared the blame of their rulers because they were not nobler than their rulers. They cannot now plead ignorance or betrayal by false ideals which duped them, because character does not depend on knowledge, and it was the character of European peoples which failed in the crisis of the world's fate, so that they followed the call back of the beast of the jungle rather than the voice of the Crucified One whom they

pretended to adore. . . . Or is war the law of human life ? Is there something more powerful than Kaisers and castes which drives masses of men against other masses in death struggles which they do not understand ? Are we really poor beasts in the jungle, striving by tooth and claw, high velocity and poison gas, for the survival of the fittest in an endless conflict ? . . .

The world will not accept that message of despair ; and millions of men to-day who went through the agony of the war are inspired by the humble belief that humanity may be cured of its cruelty and stupidity and that a brotherhood of peoples more powerful than a League of Nations may be founded in the world after its present sickness and out of the conflict of its anarchy. . . . We have seen too much blood. We want to wipe it out of our eyes and souls. Let us have Peace.

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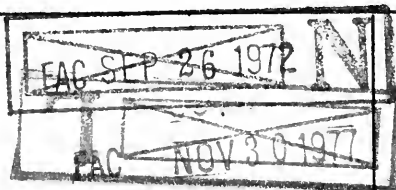






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